

LUKE

INTRODUCTION

Nineteen hundred years have not dimmed the luster of this book written by a brilliant physician, scientist and literary genius, following years of patient and thorough research and who had the incomparable opportunity of examining all of the sources, written and oral, that had any bearing on the events narrated.

Chapter 1

Verse 1

This preface is not a statement of what Luke proposed to do, but a record of what he had already done. The tense of the verbs shows that he wrote these first four verses after he had completed the body of the gospel.

“Many have undertaken to compile a full account of the things accomplished among us.” This indicates that the total content of Luke’s gospel was already the faith of the whole church at the time he wrote in 60 A.D.

Verse 2

Luke’s mention of eyewitnesses of the things he recorded “from the beginning” and “from the first,” along with conspicuous birth narratives in the first two chapters is very nearly the equivalent of saying that he had interviewed the Virgin Mary herself.

The word Luke used here for “ministers” is *huperetai*, a word used in medical terminology “to refer to doctors who served under a principal physician.” Thus, Doctor Luke referred to a group, including the apostles themselves, who served as lesser doctors under the Great Physician.

Verse 3

“Having investigated everything carefully,” is a translation of the Greek term *anōthen*, the same word which is rendered “from above” in John 3:3. “Most excellent Theophilus . . .” The use of “excellent” denominates Theophilus as a man of the rank of a knight, the term being used of such officials as the governor of a province. (Acts 23:26) The name Theophilus means “one who loves God.”

Verse 4

The Greek word here rendered “things” is actually “words” and the last clause means “which you have heard from Me,” referring to the oral instruction received by Christians in those times.

Theophilus had received only word-of-mouth teaching, indicating the universality of the word-of-mouth method of instruction. Luke’s gospel was written for the precise purpose of confirming the accuracy of the oral instruction Theophilus had already received. The oral instruction received by Theophilus was admitted by Luke to have been absolutely correct.

Verse 5

Herod the Great, a savage Idumean, who had acquired the kingship of several provinces in Palestine from the Roman Senate, to whom Herod had given large sums of money, was a descendant of Esau and fully as profane as his progenitor.

Jesus was born before Herod’s death on April 1, 4 B.C.

Zacharias was the priest of the division of Abijah. His name means, “Jehovah is Renowned.” Elizabeth was his wife. She was a descendant of Aaron. Her name means, “God is an Oath.” It is significant that she was a relative, a cousin, of the mother of our Lord (Luke 1:36); but this does not mean that Mary also belonged to the tribe of Levi, for “male descent alone determined the tribe, and Mary may have been related to Elizabeth on her mother’s side.

Verse 6

Luke was the companion of the great apostle to the Gentiles, and thus fully aware of Paul’s teaching about “the righteousness of God,” here gave what is tantamount to a definition of the “righteousness,” the same being not some kind of an inheritance through faith alone, but a state marked by the most careful and insistent obedience of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

Advocates of the “faith only” doctrine have, of course sought to soften this.

The word “righteous” took on a connotation of “rightness” with God through faith commitment to Christ rather than through obedience to legal requirement.

This verse presents a Pauline view of “righteousness” fully in harmony with Romans 1:5 and 16:26 where “obedience of faith” is also stressed.

Verse 7

The experience of this holy couple paralleled that of Abraham and Sarah in that their long and patient prayers for a child had brought no change in their status. God had not said, “No”; He had only said, “Wait!” Childlessness was a particularly deplorable stage in the thinking of Jewish people.

Verses 8-9

The necessity for the choice of the priest who would burn incense having to be made by lot sprung from the greatness of the number eligible to do this.

“The temple . . .” refers to the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of God’s temple in the inner area where few men ever entered, and into which an ordinary priest entered only once in a lifetime.

Verse 10

“The hour of incense,” would have been about 3:00 o’clock in the afternoon. It was customary for the people to assemble in the great courts of the temple and wait for the benediction to be pronounced upon them by the priest who burned the incense morning and evening. (Exodus 30:6-8)

Verse 11

“An angel of the Lord . . . appeared . . .” The angel did not approach; he just appeared, visibly manifested in an instant of time.

“The righthand side . . .” This was the north side of the altar; and the inclusion of such details indicates that Luke’s research had extended far enough to discover such circumstantial knowledge of this.

Verse 12

Such an attitude of fear and apprehension was altogether natural in the presence of an archangel, such an attitude being invariably manifested by all who ever saw such a being. Mary Magdalene seems to have talked with an angel without even realizing it. (John 20:11-18)

Verse 13

The angel said to him (Zacharias), “Do not be afraid.” This was the word of Jesus to His storm-tossed apostles, and the word of the angels to the shepherds when Jesus was born; and it was the last message of the enthroned Christ for all who believe in Him. (Revelation 1:17)

“Your petition has been heard.” This is a reference to the prayers of this holy couple for a child. It certainly appears that his prayer for a child was continually in his heart. Elizabeth was to bear a child and he was to be named John.

Verse 14

“Many will rejoice at his birth,” has reference to the rejoicing that would ultimately follow the great message from God which the promised son (John) was destined to deliver.

Verse 15

“Great in the sight of the Lord . . .” is a far different thing from “being great in the sight of men” that the vicious and unprincipled Herod the Great, had just mentioned.

“He (John) will drink no wine or liquor.” This prohibited the drinking of all intoxicants.

It is impossible to avoid the significance of the contrast in this verse between intoxicating “spirits” which John would renounce and the “Spirit” who would be in him filling him, even from His mother’s womb, and for his whole life. (Ephesians 5:18)

Verse 16

“Turn back many to the Lord.” This was literally fulfilled as detailed in Matthew 3:1-12.

Verse 17

John will go as a forerunner before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of the repenting fathers back to that of children and the

disobedient to the attitude of righteousness. The reason being, to make “them ready for the Lord, a people prepared for Him.”

Verse 18

There was an element of unbelief in this question which, in effect, denied the possibility of what the angel had promised.

Verse 19

“I am Gabriel . . .” Only two angels are named in the canonical scriptures, the other being Michael. (Daniel 10:21; Jude 9) There are seven such archangels who stand before God’s throne. (Revelation 8:2)

The thought appears to be: I am Gabriel a holy angel, yes, one of the highest angels, and I have been specifically commissioned by God to bring you this good news!

Verse 20

“You shall be silent and unable to speak . . .” This punishing rebuke was appropriate. Since Zacharias had not believed God’s word spoken by Gabriel, his own words were cut off until the time appointed. Men should believe God’s words, even when they are delivered by one of God’s messengers.

Verse 21

Zacharias was possibly very much unsettled and shaken by the awesome experience he had encountered, occasioning some delays in the completion of his duties; and also from his affliction imposed upon him by the angel.

Verse 22

The people “perceived that he had seen a vision.” It is clear that Zacharias communicated with them through the making of signs, an activity that was continued at length by him. Yet he remained a deaf-mute until his son was born.

Verse 23

When the days of his priestly service were ended he went back home.

“His priestly service,” refers to the priestly service in the worship of God and also to “service” for the needy. From the word “service,” comes the English word “liturgy,” (prescribed forms or rituals for public worship).

Zacharias did not use his handicap as an excuse for terminating his service. He fulfilled his assignment. In the same manner, people today should not use their handicap, or an excuse, as a basis for refusing to do their duty.

Verses 24-25

“Elizabeth his wife became pregnant . . .” There is no suggestion of anything out of the ordinary, except in view of the age of both and the barrenness of Elizabeth. Though the power to conceive a son under such circumstances was in a very genuine sense, from God. She hid herself for five months, saying, “This is the way the Lord has dealt with me.”

Perhaps it was the natural embarrassment that came to a person of such age undergoing such an experience, or it may be that she deliberately waited until any doubt of her condition had been removed.

“The Lord looked with favor upon me.” To the Hebrews, childlessness was viewed as a curse of God, or, at least, as a sign of God’s utmost displeasure. The mores of that society were such that Elizabeth would indeed have suffered all kinds of reproach from her family, possibly even from her husband, and certainly from her community.

Verse 26

“In the sixth month . . .” refers to the time since Elizabeth’s conception. Luke’s explanation that Nazareth was a city of Galilee indicates that many of his readers were Gentiles. No man could ever have imagined that an archangel would be commissioned by the God of all creation to visit a village such as Nazareth, a city of the despised Gentiles.

“Galilee means district of the pagans.” Many reasons have been suggested for God’s choice of such a place for the residence of the divine Messiah.

1. Its Gentile character pointed to God’s purpose of saving the Gentiles.

2. Its significance suggested that no place where men lives is beyond the Father's love and care.
3. The rural atmosphere provided an appropriate place for Jesus to develop into maturity.
4. By such a choice God signaled the reversal of human value-judgments.
5. It enabled the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus should be called a Nazarene. (Matthew 2:23)

Verse 27

“To a virgin engaged . . .” The betrothal took place a year before the couple lived together; but in every other respect it was the marriage ceremony. The bride's infidelity during the betrothal period was a capital offense. (Deuteronomy 22:23ff)

“The virgin's name was Mary . . .” This is the same as Miriam and was a common name for daughters in those times, and ever since.

CONCERNING THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The Old Testament foretold the virgin birth. The first prophecy of the Messiah ever given (Genesis 3:15) identified Him as “the seed of woman;” and that never meant, nor could it ever have meant, anything other than the virgin birth of Christ. It was prophesied again in Isaiah 7:14, a prophetic word which an apostle declared a prediction of the virgin birth. (Matthew 1:23)

The Old Testament identified the coming Redeemer as Immanuel (meaning God with us), Mighty God, Everlasting Father. (Isaiah 9:6, 1:14ff) In the New Testament where Jesus Christ is referred to no less than ten times as “God.” How could God have become a man if not by means of a virgin birth?

The pre-existence of Christ “before the world was” (John 17:5) made it an impossibility for Him to have entered earth life as a result of the normal processes of procreation in which the union of two mortals, male and female, is utterly incapable of producing a life which already existed.

All four of the gospel writers evidence their belief that Christ was born of a virgin. The virgin birth is no greater miracle than raising the dead, walking on the

sea, or changing water into wine. It even pales in significance when compared to the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, unbelief of the virgin birth is really a refusal to believe in Christ at all.

Verse 28

“Hail, favored one, the Lord is with you.” The Latin language renders the words “highly favored” (*gratia cumulata*). It means, “Having much been graced (by God)” and it is the literal translation of the Greek word.

Verse 29

The awesome presence of the mighty Gabriel was more than enough to strike terror into the heart of this young maiden in the village of Nazareth.

Verse 30

“Do not be afraid” is the same admonition addressed to Zacharias, and it was designed to calm the apprehensive excitement that swept over the virgin.

“You have found favor” is also rendered “grace.” We are not told just how she had come to receive such favor in the sight of God. The burst of praise from her lips reveals an intimate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, a deep and abiding trust in God, accompanied by a life of virtue and integrity, these have been fundamental prerequisites for the receiving of favor in the sight of God.

Verse 31

“You will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” The meaning was clearly a promise of an immediate conception. “Jesus” is the New Testament form of the Old Testament “Joshua,” and has the meaning, “Jehovah is salvation.”

Matthew’s account quotes the angel as giving the reason why this name was chosen, “for it is He who shall save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21) Thus, the great purpose of Jesus’ entry into our earth life was not political or secular, but redemptive.

Verse 32

“The Son of the Most High . . .” Strangely, this is the title given by the demoniac (Mark 5:7) to our Lord, suggesting that this is the one of the titles given to the Son of God throughout the unseen world of angels and demons. Note: “Most High” is used seven times in Luke and only four times in the rest of the New Testament.

“The throne of his father David . . .” The virgin maiden of Nazareth might easily have understood these words as a reference to the secular throne of the Hebrews, despite the fact that the very name JESUS emphasized the moral and spiritual of God and pointed away from any literal kingdom.

Jesus was indeed destined to sit upon the throne of David, but it was to be upon the universal spiritual kingdom of which David’s throne was merely a feeble type.

Jesus’ ascension to that throne would not come through military power, political change, or earthly favor; but it would be accomplished by His resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:31)

Mary’s descent was from David, and Joseph, the husband of Mary, was also the direct heir to the Davidic throne, through Solomon, thus making Jesus the legal heir of David, as well as His fleshly descendant.

Verse 33

“The house of Jacob . . .” This patriarch’s God-given name was “Israel”; and the Israel over which Christ is now reigning is the true “Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16; Matthew 19:28)

“And of His kingdom there shall be no end . . .” This is a reference to the perpetual existence of Christ’s church throughout the present dispensation of God’s grace. (Daniel 2:44; Ephesians 3:21)

Verse 34

From this it is clear that the angel had foretold Mary’s immediate conception. Consummation of her marriage was an event scheduled some considerable time afterward, her perplexity was natural.

“I know not a man . . .” Mary is astonished that she is to have a son before her marriage. Roman Catholic interpreters have discovered support in this verse for their dogma that Mary had taken a vow of perpetual virginity.

Verse 35

The record of what the archangel Gabriel said to the virgin mother of our Lord is unimpeachable. Luke’s narrative here derives from the lips of Mary herself; and, as to the meaning of what was promised in this announcement, the words of Bishop Pearson on the Creed are appropriate:

“The Word was conceived in the womb of a woman, not after the manner of men, but by the singular, powerful, invisible, immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby a virgin, beyond the law of nature, was enabled to conceive; and that which was conceived in her was originally and completely sanctified.”

“The power of the Most-High shall overshadow you . . .” “Overshadow” recalls the cloud over the tabernacle during the wilderness wandering. The word is used in all the synoptic gospels of the cloud that came at the transfiguration. The only other New Testament usage is in Acts 5:15.

The term is always used of divine power. The concept is reminiscent of the Spirit hovering over the waters in Genesis 1:2. Here the Spirit would be active in a new “creation” of God.

Verse 36

Mary had not requested a sign, but one was given. The providential conception that had been allowed to Zacharias and Elizabeth would provide exactly the encouragement that Mary would require.

Verse 37

It was not his own word that was delivered by Gabriel, but the word of Almighty God; and what was true (and ever is true) of the word Gabriel delivered is also true of the word of God delivered by the sacred writers of the New Testament, including, of course, the words through the beloved physician Luke.

Verse 38

This is the record of Mary's acceptance of God's promise. "Handmaid" in the Greek means bondservant, or slave. How could she hope to explain such a thing to Joseph? What would the neighbors say? And there were the stern provisions of the Law that might require her to be stoned to death. (Deuteronomy 22:23ff) Never was there a greater act of faith.

Verse 39

Mary arose and went into the city of Judah. The city of Judah may have been a place called "*Juttah*." According to history "*Juttah*" was one of the forty-eight cities given to the priests. (Joshua 15:55; 11:16) "*Juttah*" was located in the hill country of Judaea.

Verses 40-41

Mary entered the house of Zacharias, and when Elizabeth his wife heard the salutation of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.

Verse 42

The loud cry of Elizabeth could have been nothing else except a shout of joy. This greeting from Elizabeth did not follow Mary's revelation of her own conception, but preceded it. Elizabeth had become aware of Mary's pregnancy through a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. Her words, therefore, were of monumental encouragement to the virgin who would at once have accepted Elizabeth's salutation as a divine confirmation of all that the angel Gabriel had foretold.

Verse 43

The New Testament does not relate how Elizabeth had arrived at the conclusion that Mary would be the mother of the Messiah. Her words in this verse recognized Jesus as Lord within a very short while after His conception.

Verse 44

Elizabeth interpreted that leaping of the unborn child as proof that the Savior was already conceived in the virgin's womb.

Verse 45

Elizabeth's use of the word "Lord" here and in verse 43 is significant. There it meant "Messiah," here it means the "Father in Heaven." This testifies at once to the oneness of God and Christ, and to the fact of their being two different persons; hence there can be no valid ground here for denominating Mary as the "Mother of God."

THE MAGNIFICAT

Mary's marvelous response recorded in the next ten verses is also called "The Virgin's Hymn."

Verses 46-48

This is the first of four divisions of the Magnificat. It details the joy, reverence, and gratitude of a person, counted by the world as lowly, and who refers to herself as a slave. It utters praise to God for what He has done for her.

Verses 49-50

These verses extol the power, the holiness, and the mercy of God, three of the great attributes of the Almighty. The words seem to reach a climax with reference to God's mercy. A particular aspect of the mercy was seen, and perhaps had already been realized by Mary, in the patient and understanding love of the incomparable Joseph who dared the scorn of the world to maintain his patient place at the side of his beloved Mary.

Verses 51-53

This gracious hymn contains the "dynamite" of the Christian religion which formed in the world, a triple revolution.

1. He scatters the proud. This is a moral revolution.
2. He casts down the mighty . . . He exalts the humble. This is a social revolution.
3. He filled those who are hungry . . . those who are rich He has sent away. This is an economic revolution.

Verses 54-55

In the first division of this matchless hymn, there was a stanza regarding the blessing and privilege that had come to Mary herself; in the second there was uttered a praise of the power, holiness, and mercy of God.

In the third stanza there was prophesied the world consequences of the faith of Jesus Christ; and in this final stanza there was a connecting of the old and new covenants, a glimpse of the true Israel, the church, and the relation of all the redeemed to the old institution as the true spiritual seed of Abraham.

Verse 56

It is idle to speculate on whether or not she remained till John the Baptist was born, for there is nothing in the word of God that settles the question.

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Verse 57

Elizabeth's time was fulfilled and she brought forth a son. Thus was fulfilled the word of God through Gabriel to Zacharias.

Verse 58

This verse seems to say that many, even of the relatives, did not know of the approaching event of this birth, but they heard the glad news after it happened.

Verse 59

This is an authentic glimpse of a small community where the officious neighbors took a ready hand in naming someone else's child. Of course, they meant well! It was customary to name a male child upon the occasion of his being circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.

Verse 60

Elizabeth answered and said, "He shall be called John." This indicates that Zacharias had already informed Elizabeth of the name bestowed by the angel Gabriel.

Verse 61

The heavy hand of tradition was in evidence here; and, of all the people who ever lived, the Jews seem to have had the greatest regard for such things. No kindred of theirs had ever been called by this name, “John.”

Verse 62

“They made signs,” which indicates the deafness of Zacharias; because, if he had been able to hear, there would have been no reason to “make signs.”

Verse 63

Asking for a writing tablet he wrote, “His name is John.” The tablets were usually made of wood covered with a thin coating of wax. Writing on such a tablet was done with a small iron stylus. Zacharias affirmed the word of the angel of God as truth; and his impediment was quickly removed.

Verse 64

True to the word given to Zacharias by Gabriel, his handicap lasted only until the son had come as promised, and the fact of his name had been determined. The prophet Zacharias used his first words to bless the name of God and to extol His praise.

Verse 65

“Fear came on all.” “Fear” is a natural result of such providential intervention as had been evidenced, not only in the birth, but in the naming of John.

Verse 66

“Laid up in their hearts,” is the great expectations which many had with regard to a child providentially born to aged parents, who might indeed have become an orphan at quite an early age.

“For the hand of the Lord was with him . . .” This is a projection of the attitude in that community as it extended for years after the events narrated.

“Lord” is the word Luke used here of the Almighty, and the same word was used of Jesus even before He was born (verse 43); thus this gospel author joined

the Apostle (John 1:1) and other sacred authors in ascribing absolute deity to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 67

Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and “prophesied.” This word, as used in the New Testament, is not limited in meaning to the mere prediction of future events.

Paul, a close friend of Luke, said, “But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.” (1 Corinthians 14:3)

“Filled with the holy Spirit . . .” The inspiration and infallible accuracy of what Zacharias said in this circumstance is affirmed.

THE BENEDICTUS

The twelve verses recording Zacharias’ words could be briefly summarized as a thanksgiving for the arrival of the times of the Messiah.

It was God’s blessing and mercy manifested by His fulfilling at last the ancient prophecies of the Old Testament, His breaking the centuries of silence after Malachi, and His establishing the promised reality of the covenant with Abraham that dominated the major part of Zacharias’ prophecy.

Like the *Magnificat*, this portion of Luke has been used extensively for the ritual prescribed services (liturgies) of the historical church.

Verses 68-69

In these verses Zacharias is speaking, not of his own son John, but of Jesus the Christ, who at this time has not yet been born, so it is a prophetic statement. What God promises is as certain as if it had already happened.

“Horn of salvation . . .” suggests to the Israelites, the very greatest strength.

Verses 70-71

Beginning with Genesis 3:15 and through the last words of the Old Testament, there are 333 prophecies regarding Jesus the Savior; and fittingly enough this received emphasis by Zacharias.

“Salvation from our enemies . . .” It is too much to suppose Zacharias knew the full meaning of this; for, like the majority of his contemporaries, he might fully have expected that God would chase out the Romans and restore the earthly kingdom.

The true enemies of which God spoke through him, however, were Satan and the sins which warred against the souls of men. Speaking under the power of God’s Spirit, Zacharias spoke truth beyond his own full comprehension of it. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Verses 72-73

These two verses show the connection between the old and new covenants. The covenant with Abraham had envisioned the blessing of “all the families of the earth” through the glorious Seed which is Christ. (Genesis 12:1-3) God had confirmed the covenant with an oath. (Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13--15)

Just as God’s promise to Abraham of a son was delayed of fulfillment until it seemed no longer possible, so also the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom had been held in abeyance for centuries, the last voice of prophecy having expired with Malachi; but now all was to be fulfilled.

The materialistic, secular priests, and a majority of the people, thought that mere fleshly descent from Abraham was all that mattered; but of course, it was only the “spiritual seed,” the people of like faith and character with Abraham, to which the promise really pertained. It was the great mission of John the Baptist to enlighten Israel on this very point.

Verses 74-75

Zacharias here foretold the character of the coming kingdom as one in which Israel would be delivered from their enemies and would continue in the service of God with holiness and righteousness and without fear.

Verse 76

Only the inspiration of the Holy Spirit could have prompted the father of this child of such long hopes and prayers to have deferred any mention of him till near the end of the prophecy.

“Go on before the Lord . . .” The imagery is that of a herald going before a king to prepare the way for a royal visitor. Here too the subordination of John, the child of hope, to the royal dignity of the yet unborn Christ is contrary to all natural human behavior and must be attributed solely to the inspiration of the prophet Zacharias by the Holy Spirit.

“To prepare His ways . . .” The principal burden upon John was to enlighten Israel with regard to the fundamental truth with regard to just who were really the sons of Abraham.

Verses 77-78

“By the forgiveness of their sins . . .” This is the salvation Jesus came to provide. It is the forgiveness that the soul cries for and it is available nowhere except in Jesus Christ the Savior. When either churches or individuals lose sight of this, total moral blindness is the result.

It is not the standard of living, nor political freedom, nor civil rights, nor economic parity—or anything else which distinguishes the salvation of Christ—it is the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness of sins is the distinctive mark of the new covenant. The term here rendered forgiveness is found eight times in Luke’s writings, and only seven times in the rest of the New Testament.

“The Sunrise from on high shall visit us . . .” John also identified Jesus as “the true Light lighting every man, coming into the world.” (John 1:10)

Christ is indeed the Light of the world; and it was appropriate that He should thus have been identified by the very first prophet to speak after the promise of Malachi (4:2) that the “Sun of Righteousness” should arise “with healing in His wings.”

Verse 79

In this verse there is a certain reference to salvation for the Gentiles, as more pointedly stated by Matthew, who explained Jesus’ residence in Capernaum as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2. Zacharias’ words in this verse correspond perfectly with the prophecy of Isaiah.

“To guide our feet into the way of peace . . .” The word “peace” is like “forgiveness” in Luke’s writings, where it occurs nineteen times, twelve times in this gospel, and occurring only nine times in the rest of the New Testament.

The type of peace referred to is peace with God through the forgiveness of sins and a restoration of fellowship with the Creator.

Verse 8o

This verse compresses thirty years of John’s life into one sentence.

“The deserts . . .” refers to the desolate and forbidding wastelands south of Jericho and along by the Dead Sea. This region was not uninhabited. “The Qumran covenanters had established their headquarters in this general area, as proved by the Dead Sea Scrolls

Chapter 2

This chapter details the birth of Christ (1-7), the announcement to the shepherds (8-20), ceremonies of the law of Moses observed on behalf of Jesus (21-24), the prophecy of Simeon (23-35), the thanksgiving of Anna (36-39), episode when Jesus was twelve years old (40-51), and a one-sentence summary of some eighteen years of Jesus’ life (52).

Verse 1

“Augustus” is the title given by the Roman Senate to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (63 B.C. to A.D. 14). “All the inhabited earth” was a “technical term used freely to refer to the Roman Empire.” “That a census be taken . . .” Such censuses were taken every fourteen years; and from 20 A.D. to 270 A.D., we possess actual documents from every census taken. Here is an instance where further knowledge has shown the accuracy of the New Testament.

Verse 2

The second census under Quirinius was in 6 A.D. (Acts 5:37); and the words “the first” in this passage refer to the census fourteen years earlier in 8 B.C., but which was delayed in Palestine till the time coinciding with the birth of Christ in 6 B.C.

Quirinius was twice governor and presided over both. A series of inscriptions in Asia Minor show that Quirinius was governor of Syria in 10-7 B.C., and again in 6 A.D. In existence is a document of the Roman government with instructions pertaining to these great periodical census and with the edict:

“It is necessary to compel all those, who for any cause whatsoever are residing outside their own districts to return to their homes, that they may both carry out the regular order of the census, and may also diligently attend the cultivation of their allotments.”

Verse 4

Luke’s design in this chapter was to show how it came about that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, despite the fact of Joseph and Mary’s residence in Nazareth, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2. The only reason cited by Luke for this journey to Bethlehem was the decree of Caesar and the necessity for Joseph’s obedience to it.

Childers, an author says, “Neither Roman nor Jewish law required Mary to accompany Joseph for this registration.”

He gives these reasons why he thinks she did accompany her husband.

1. The fact of their love for each other.
2. Mary’s desire that Joseph should be with her for her delivery,
3. The leading of the Holy Spirit; nor may we leave out of sight the presumption that Mary knew of Micah’s prophecy and, guided by God’s Spirit, moved forward the fulfillment of it.

Elizabeth had already identified Mary’s unborn Son as the Messiah (1:43).

Here, the big point is that the fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem was accomplished by the pagan lord of the empire, Augustus Caesar, whose census was the immediate cause of it.

“Bethlehem . . .” means “place of bread,” and it was the prophecy that the Bread of Life should have been born there, and that the Son of David should have been born in the village so intimately associated with the history of David the shepherd king of Israel.

Verse 5

“Who was engaged to him . . .” indicates that the relationship between Joseph and Mary was still that of an unconsummated marriage; although, of course, they had been living together since the command to Joseph by the angel in a dream. (Matthew 1:20)

“Was with child . . .” suggests that, since the time of delivery was near, the most urgent considerations had induced Mary to accompany Joseph of this trip.

Verse 6-7

“Her first-born son . . .” This means that there were other children born to Mary after this. Had Luke believed in the perpetual virginity of Mary he most likely would have used “only born” rather than first-born.

Both Mark and Matthew named four sons called “brothers” of Jesus; and there was utterly no indication by either sacred writer that “brothers” was to be construed otherwise than in the ordinary sense. (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3)

“Wrapped Him in cloths . . .” Swaddling clothes were like this—they consisted of a square of cloth with a long bandage-like strip coming diagonally off one corner. The child was first wrapped in the square of cloth, and then the long strip was wound round and round about him.

“And laid Him in a manger . . .” One cannot fail to be impressed with the intimations of Christ’s final suffering which appear in things related to His birth.

In His death, they wrapped Him in “bandages” much like the swaddling clothes; and He was nailed to the “tree” much like the manger made from a scooped-out log. He who was to bear the sins of all men, in accepting a share of man’s mortality, was even in His birth associated with emblems of the final suffering.

There was no room for them in the inn . . .” No room for the Son of God! What a commentary is this upon the situation of Adam’s rebellious race when the Dayspring from on High visited our sinful world! The King had indeed come to visit His children, but what unworthy hosts they proved to be!

Just what day of the week, month, or year did this occur? It is simply impossible to tell, there being, in fact, some question of exactly what year it was. The comment of Adam Clarke is worthy of repeating in this contest. He said:

Fabricus gives a catalogue of no less than 136 opinions concerning the year of Christ's birth; and as to His birthday, it has been placed by Christian sects and learned men in very month of the year!; . . . but the Latin Church , supreme in power and infallible in judgment ,placed it on the 25th of December, the very day on which the ancient Romans celebrated the feast of their goddess Bruma!

ANNUNCIATION TO THE SHEPHERDS

Verse 8

“And there were some shepherds. . .” Their names are unknown, but they were appropriate representatives of Adam's race. “Staying out in the fields . . .” The shepherds were better representatives of mankind than dwellers in strong houses might have been. “By night . . .” Appropriately, Jesus was born at night; for there was a darker night symbolized by that event.

The scepter had about departed from Judah; the savage Idumean was on the throne of David; pagan darkness engulfed the world; and the lord of the whole world was the first of Caesars, Augustus, whose successors would drown the world in blood, debauch the government, and usher in the age of darkness.

Beyond the confines of the ancient empire, the long and shameful gloom had settled over all the world; all nations sat in darkness.

Verse 9

The angels appearing to Zacharias and to Mary, already recorded by Luke, do not seem to have been accompanied by the “glory” mentioned here. In this instance, it was necessary for the shepherds to be able to see.

Verse 10

“Do not be afraid . . .” Fear has ever been the bane of human existence on earth, ever since the fall from Eden. Man is born, with only two fears that of falling and that of a loud noise; but, to these, his experiences quickly adds many more, and his fertile imagination countless others.

“For all the people . . .” The good news announced by the angels was no merely for Israel, but for Gentiles and all men.

We have Luke the Gentile recording the first announcement of Jesus’ birth, not to Gentiles, but to Jewish shepherds. On the other hand, Matthew the Jew, and scholarly expert in the Old Testament scriptures, introduced the Gentile wise men as first learning of the Savior’s birth through the message conveyed by the star. (Matthew 2:1, 3) Wonderful are the ways of the Lord!

Verse 11

Three titles of the Son of God were announced by the angels.

1. “Savior . . .” This title has reference to Jesus’ office as the sin bearer, the procurer of salvation for the sons of men, a salvation which, pre-eminently above everything else, was the remission of their sins and restoration of the fellowship lost in Eden.
2. “Christ . . .” This identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the Shiloh, Anointed, Suffering Servant, and Messiah foretold of old.
3. “The Lord . . .” The preference Luke showed for this title in his record of Jesus’ life and teachings is alleged by the critics to have been the cause of his using it in such contexts as this, “retroactively,” thus denying that Luke really reported here exactly what the angels said.

Such a view is totally unworthy of acceptance. Rather, it is in the use of the term “Lord” by Elizabeth and by the angels, etc., which accounts for Luke’s preference for it.

Verse 12

“This will be a sign . . .” Not the baby wrapped in cloths, which were common, but the baby lying in a manger, was the sign.

Verse 13

“A multitude of the heavenly host . . .” A host of angels is represented in the Old Testament as forming the bodyguard of Deity. (Psalm 103:21; Daniel 7:10)

Angels shouted for joy at creation (Job 38:7), served at the giving of the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:58; Galatians 3:19); and now with greater wonder than ever, and with even greater joy, they celebrated the entry of God into human life.

Verse 14

“Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth; good will to men.” It is not “good will to men” those who are wicked, but “good will to men” who honor God, which was promised and proclaimed by the angels.

Verse 15

Note that here “Lord” is the title of the Father in heaven; and the angels had just used it of Jesus. The angels had not commanded the shepherds to go see the child Jesus, but the implication that they should do so was contained in the sign given to aid their finding Him.

Verse 16

“In haste . . .” is significant. When God gives His great opportunities to men, it is needful that they should seize them at once. Moving quickly to do God’s will is seizing the flood tide that leads on to victory. Delay may hinder or thwart altogether the blessing God intended.

Verse 17

Having seen the child themselves, they now had evidence that would satisfy others; and accordingly, they became the first preachers of the gospel, and went and proclaimed to others that the Messiah had come.

Verse 18

“All that heard it wondered . . .” Most people were inclined to wonder about such a message; but there is no evidence that any of them at all were concerned enough about the coming of the Messiah to investigate it any further. This is the attitude of the vast majority of men in all generations.

Verse 19

“Mary treasured up all these things (sayings) . . .” Two things of importance are here.

1. Mary kept all these sayings. “In her heart,” does not modify “kept,” which is an indication that Mary made accurate records of all that took place.
2. She pondered them in her heart. This indicates that Mary continually had these things in mind, meditating upon them, and wondering, perhaps, what the full import of such things could be.

Verse 20

“The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God . . .” Great religious privilege did not release them from their daily task; thus it is for all who share in the heavenly message of the Savior. The Christian gospel in the lives of men does not release them from earthly duties.

MOSAIC CEREMONIES FULFILLED FOR JESUS

Verse 21

Not a jot or a tittle of the law was broken by Jesus. He was born under the law and fulfilled all of its requirements perfectly. Since the purification of Mary, mentioned a little later, and the circumcision of Christ were commandments of the law, they were obeyed.

Circumcision was necessary for the future usefulness of Christ; without it, He could not have entered any synagogue, or had access to the people, or have been regarded as the Messiah.

Verses 22-23

“Their purification . . .” carries some hint that Jesus needed purification also; and if so, this has reference to ceremonial uncleanness, a thing Jesus suffered as an inherent factor of the incarnation. He was “made to be sin” on our behalf. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Childers wrote: “His whole life shows that He identified Himself with this sinful race—though He was sinless. Jesus always submitted to religious rites

which were necessary for sinful men, even though they were not really necessary for Him.”

The teaching regarding the purification of women after childbirth and the redemption of the firstborn are mentioned here for the sake of showing that all legal requirements under the law were carefully observed. (Leviticus 12; Exodus 13:2; Numbers 8:16; 18:15)

Verse 24

Mary and Joseph offered the offering of the poor, as allowed for those whose means were meager. (Leviticus 12:8) Luke included the fact of exactly the kind of offering they made.

THE SONG OF SIMEON

Verse 25

“Simeon . . .” This man has been identified as the son of the famous Hillel, father of Gamaliel, and president of the Sanhedrin. “Righteous and devout . . .” The Greek word for “devout” means “circumspect or cautious.”

Thus, Simeon was not a man to make rash or unconsidered judgments. The word also means “God-fearing.” “Looking for the consolation of Israel . . .” He longed for the coming of the Messiah; and the Spirit was upon him preparing his heart to recognize Him.

This statement indicates that it was directly under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit that Simeon was told to go into the temple, thus making a supplementary revelation to the one already received regarding the promise that he could live to see the Messiah.

Verse 26

His waiting for the fulfillment of so glorious a promise was referred to as “waiting for the Consolation of Israel” in the preceding verse.

Verses 27-28

“The parents . . .” Luke’s use of this word for Joseph and Mary here and again in verse 41, and Mary’s reference to Joseph as “father” of Jesus, raise no question whatever regarding the virgin birth.

Verses 29-32

This passage carries the imagery of a bondservant requesting of his master that he might be dismissed. Simeon recognized that in the giving of Christ, God had indeed accomplished the salvation of men inclusive of the Gentiles.

Verse 33

Childers’ writes: “Simeon was not telling Joseph and Mary anything they had not previously learned about Jesus. They marveled, rather, that these truths should come to them from a stranger. The marvel to them, and to us, is that everything that was said by all of God’s messengers harmonized so perfectly.”

Verse 34

Luke had not forgotten about the virgin birth, nor had his reference to “parents” and “father” been any denial of it. Notice how it comes into focus here in the words of Simeon who addressed these words, not to Joseph, at all, but to Mary, Jesus’ mother.

“Fall and rise of many . . .” Those rising would be such men as the fishers of Galilee who would welcome His apostles, and those falling would be such unbelievers as Annas and Caiaphas, the mighty high priests, and the ruling hierarchy.

“For a sign to be opposed . . .” The name of Jesus was spoken against, not only by the Roman writers such as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny, who opposed Jesus with intense bitterness, but “the great rabbinical schools which flourished in the first three centuries of Christianity, commonly used such names of Christ as “That Deceiver,” That Man, and The Hung.”

Even today, Jesus is spoken against by the servants of Satan throughout the world.

Verse 35

This prophecy foretold that Mary would live to see Jesus crucified, and of the bitter sorrow in her own heart at the things which would befall the Son. (Note: Joseph was not included in this.)

Calvary is God's divider and separator of the good from the bad. The life of Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, polarizes the hearts of men, turning the wicked away and drawing the redeemed upward to eternal life.

ANNA SPEAKS OF THE CHILD

Verses 36-37

Anna was of great age. The Greek New Testament describes' Anna's age: "And she was a widow until years eighty-four." It is not clear if the eighty-four years should be applied to her widowhood, or to her whole life.

"Never left the temple . . ." She had never forsaken temple duties, despite her phenomenal age.

Matthew Henry said: "It is pleasant to see aged Christians not weary of well-doing; but taking more and more pleasure in it, and seeing more and more need of it, till they come to heaven. Those who are diligent and faithful in improving their light and means, shall have further discoveries."

Verse 38

"To speak of Him . . ." This would normally refer to "God:" but Luke is still writing of phenomena regarding the infant child.

Verse 39

Luke omitted the flight to Egypt and other important details of the life of Christ at this point. It was unlikely that he had a copy of Matthew available to him.

Verse 40

In this verse Luke relates the normal growth and mental development of the Christ child.

“Increasing in wisdom . . .” means “becoming full of wisdom.” This emphasized the normalcy of Jesus during this period, a normalcy that Luke had clearly in mind throughout.

THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Verses 41-43

All Jewish adult males were required to attend the Passover; and it was usually observed by the entire families of all the people who were physically able to make the journey.

Caravans of people attending the great feast traveled in companies; and it was quite easy for Jesus to “get lost” from the return journey.

Verses 44-45

These verses form the basis for several great sermons on the Restoration.

1. Many continue along life’s way believing that Jesus is in their company, when actually He is not.
2. The search for Christ begins with kinsfolk and neighbors, but He is not with them either.
3. Then, let men return to Jerusalem, that is, to the gospel that was first preached in Jerusalem, to the true teachings of the New Testament.
4. Sure enough, Jesus was found in the temple, a figure of His church; and that is where He is found today.

Verses 46-47

His answers mentioned in the last clause were the type of answers students return to teachers examining them with questions. The only fact affirmed here is the advancement of understanding already attained by the boy Jesus at such an early age.

Verse 48

The word “Son” here is actually “Child” showing that Mary still regarded Jesus as a child. This event took place at that age of Jesus when He was first fully conscious of just “who” He was.

Verse 49

What did Jesus mean? He was saying, “Look, we were all in the temple; I did not leave it; you did. I did not leave you; you left Me.”

“In my Father’s house . . .” This is the first recorded utterance of Jesus; and, in it, He laid claim to a relationship to Almighty God.

Verse 50

To misunderstand this verse as implying that Joseph and Mary had never even heard of such a thing as the virgin birth, or the Messiahship of their Son is to miss the whole point of Luke’s sublime history. Those who are not ignorant, most always, pretend they misunderstood, because of unbelief.

Verse 51

The precocious wisdom of the boy Jesus, and His certain consciousness of His unique relationship to the Father in heaven, were not looked upon by Jesus as sufficient to His earthly mission; but He recognized Himself still to be a child.

Verse 52

The fourfold development of Christ: mentally, physical, socially, and spiritually is affirmed in this verse. He who “emptied himself” and became a man found it needful to pass through the helplessness of infancy, the ignorance of babyhood, and the incompetence of adolescence, just like all men.

The true humanity of our Lord is thus brilliantly presented by Luke, no less that His true deity.

Chapter 3

In this chapter lies the record of the emergence of John the Baptist, (Verses 1-6), the message he delivered, (Verses 7-14), his announcement of the Christ,

(Verses 15-17), the conclusion of John's ministry and the baptism of Jesus, (Verses 18-22), and the genealogy of Jesus as traced through Mary, (Verses 23-38).

Verses 1-2

"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius . . ." This dates the emergence of John the Baptist and the beginning of the ministry of Christ.

Jesus' ministry began in 26 A.D., and John's ministry having been prior to that, with the two overlapping somewhat.

This harmonizes with a date of April 6, 30 A.D. for Jesus crucifixion, as frequently determined scientifically through computer studies.

Verse 3

This was an extensive area evangelized by John, some sixty-five miles in a straight line from Galilee to the Dead Sea.

"Baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins . . ." This baptism was a new rite, "not founded on the immersions of the old dispensation, but a divinely appointed act, peculiar to Christianity, and first mentioned by John."

It is one of seven baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. It consisted of the immersion of the penitent in water by the administrator, requiring John to preach where there was "much water." (John 3:23) The immersion was coupled with repentance, and was unto the remission of sins.

John's baptism was in fact, "God's baptism;" and, those who rejected it rejected God. (Luke 7:30) It was the only baptism ever submitted to by the apostles of Christ (Paul excepted) and was the only baptism in force until Pentecost. Those baptized by John and who followed on to receive the Spirit of Christ experienced the new birth, being born of water and of the Spirit, as Jesus commanded. (John 3:1-5)

Significantly, the new birth, which requires a birth of water (baptism) and a birth of the Spirit (receiving the Holy Spirit as promised in Acts 2:38), could not be experienced until after Jesus was risen from the dead. (John 7:39)

Only a small number of the proud Jewish leaders submitted to John's baptism, a failure on their part, which issued finally in their total rejection of the Lord.

Christ brought the rite of baptism over into Christianity, making it mandatory for all who would be saved. (Mark 16:15-16) The tragic pattern of rejection, as in the case of John's baptism, has been continued under the new covenant; and those who reject it should take note of the consequences in the people who rejected baptism under John.

“Repentance . . .” is a change of the human will that issues in reformation of life. It may occur in a moment, but the results of it last a lifetime. It is the basic condition of God's forgiveness; and, as long as one is under the probation of life, the need of repentance is constant.

Verses 4-6

This prophecy is from Isaiah 40:3ff, the same being God's promise of a mighty prophet who would precede the coming Messiah, the imagery being that of a herald going before an ancient king to make his journey easier.

Josephus in his book (THE WARS OF THE JEWS, page 717), relates how Vespasian marched into Galilee, with his men going before him to prepare the way.

(They) were to make the road even and straight, and if it were anywhere rough and hard to be passed over, to plane it, and to cut down the woods that hindered their march, etc. The preparation needed for the rising of the Son of Righteousness was a moral improvement of the people.

The conceit that physical descent from Abraham would entitle them to Messiah's blessing, the foolish notion that the Messiah would be a secular king like Solomon, the conviction that he would drive out the Romans and execute a vindictive and punitive judgment against their Gentile enemies, and the widespread hypocrisy and immorality of the people, the selfishness and hardness of the rich, and the greedy gouging of the people by the concessioners in the temple itself, the gross ritualism and secularism that had buried God's true law under the priestly traditions—all these cried out to God for correction.

“All flesh shall see the salvation of God . . .” Isaiah's great prophecy should have alerted the Jews to the inclusion in God's plan of salvation for the Gentiles; but the leaders of the people were set adamantly against any such idea. The chosen

people were destined to find in this concept the impossibility of their accepting Christ, which resulted in their own rejection and judicial hardening.

PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Verse 7

This verse was addressed to the insincere, those who were willing to submit to a rite, but whose lives bore no fruit of repentance.

Verse 8

The usual response to any demand that the Israelites of that day should repent was to the effect that they did not need to repent, since they were sons of Abraham.

The fact that all the promises were not to Abraham's fleshly descendants, but to his spiritual seed (the people who were of the character and faith of Abraham), was unknown to the Israel of that generation. The majority of fleshly Israel only scoffed at the truth.

Verse 9

"Axe . . . at the root . . ." This was a prophetic vision of the destruction of the Holy City which would ensue as a result of the rejection of Christ by Israel.

The metaphor is that of a farmer who chops down an unfruitful tree and burns it. Too long Israel had been barren, as far as any fruits of righteousness were concerned; and her day of grace at the time John spoke was growing short.

Verses 10-11

John's message was that the people should live moral and upright lives, with unselfishness toward the hungry, the poor and the naked, as stated in verse 11.

Verse 12

The significance here is that a class of persons utterly despised by the Israelites because of their work as tax-collectors for the hated Romans, accepted John's baptism, confirming their lives as he directed.

There was an additional affront to Israel in the very theory that such persons could please God while still in the employ of the Romans. Significantly, John did not suggest that they resign their jobs.

Verse 13

It was not the tax-collecting, but dishonest extortion that was viewed as sin.

Verse 14

Even soldiers were not considered beyond the bounds of redemption. They were not commanded to leave the army but to exhibit attitudes of restraint, truthfulness, and contentment.

JOHN THE BAPTIST ANNOUNCES THE CHRIST

Verse 15

This denotes the widespread, sensational success of John's preaching and the wonderment on the part of many, if perhaps this was indeed the Messiah. John denied that he was the Christ. (John 1:18-28)

Verse 16

Who are those to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire? The conviction here is that John spoke of the two classes of humanity to be "baptized" by Jesus. His followers were to be guided by the indwelling Spirit, and the unbelievers to go away into eternal fire. (Matthew 25:41)

Verse 17

Israel was the Lord's threshing-floor; the wheat to be gathered into His barn was the true spiritual seed who would accept Christ and be saved. The chaff represented the unbelievers who would reject and crucify the Lord. The unquenchable fire is a metaphor for the everlasting punishment which shall be meted out to the wicked.

CONCLUSION OF JOHN'S MINISTRY

Verse 18-20

This concluded John's ministry, Luke not pausing to recount the story of John's death; but there is a suggestion in this account which reveals Herod's treatment of John as the worst of all his crimes.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Verses 21-22

"Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying . . ." Many have pondered the reasons why Jesus was baptized.

1. The reason that He Himself gave, "Was to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15) This indicates that it would have been unbecoming, even of the sinless Christ, to have withheld obedience to God's commandment.
2. By so doing, He indicated the adoption of the rite of baptism to be the initiatory ceremony by which men are inducted into Christianity.
3. Jesus, through this obedience, fulfilled God's command.
4. His baptism, as revealed in the scriptures, prefigured the importance of the ceremony in the true religion under the new covenant. Jesus' baptism announced the importance of it for all men.
5. His baptism symbolized the true meaning of the ordinance in Christianity:
 - a. One is not a child of God until he is baptized, just as God recognized Christ as His beloved Son immediately after His baptism.
 - b. Prayer, though not denied to anyone, is in many special ways the peculiar privilege of Christians, a privilege contingent upon their baptism.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is a gift to Christians, contingent upon their being (among other things) baptized (Acts 2:38); and significantly, the

Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended and remained upon Jesus after His baptism.

It cannot be denied that the baptism commanded in the great commission (following faith, repentance, and confession) is prior to the convert's becoming a child of God, receiving the Holy Spirit, and entering into the more exalted prayer-privileges pertaining only to Christians.

Christ was baptized to give us an example how we might follow Him in baptism, since it is impossible for believer's baptism to correspond with Christ's. It was not necessary for Him; but it is necessary for men.

Believer's baptism is "for the remission of sins;" but Christ's was to fulfill all righteousness.

"Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form, like a dove . . ." This was the heavenly portent by which John the Baptist recognized the Messiah. (John 1:38)

Appropriately, the dove was a clean creature under Mosaic law, acceptable in the holy sacrifices as an offering to God, an emblem in all ages of peace, gentleness, and innocence, a monogamous creature, possessing no gall, and was used as a messenger.

"A voice came out of heaven . . . Thou art My beloved Son . . ." Three persons of the godhead are in evidence here: Christ coming up out of the water, the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him, and the voice of the Father out of heaven.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THROUGH MARY

Verses 23-38

"Thirty years of age . . ." refers to the age of Jesus.

We will not undertake any exhaustive "harmonization" of the two separate genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke. It is now and has been this student's conviction for many years that Luke's genealogy cannot possibly be Joseph's line, since Luke spelled out in the most emphatic manner the fact that Joseph had no physical connection with Jesus.

By taking the genealogy back to Adam, Luke stressed the fact of Jesus' being the Savior of all people, not merely of the Jews.

Matthew's genealogy through Joseph was given for the purpose of showing that Christ, though His legal father Joseph was the legitimate heir to the throne of David.

It was necessary that the two genealogies should be provided, one showing His legal status in the eyes of men, the other giving His true physical descent.

Matthew wrote from Joseph's standpoint, Luke from Mary's.

Note: The title "Virgin Mary" cannot be used to support the theory of the virgin's perpetual virginity. Matthew referred to "Simon the Leper" (Matthew 26:6) without any implication that he still had leprosy when Jesus was in his house for dinner; in the same manner, a reference to the Virgin Mary implies nothing of her virginity during the period after the birth of our Lord. (Charles L. Childers, *op. cit.*)

Chapter 4

This chapter has Luke's account of the temptation of Christ (verses 1-14), His preaching at Nazareth (verses 15-30), the cure of the demoniac at Capernaum (verses 31-37), the healing of Peter's wife's mother (verses 38-39), the mention of many healings (verses 40-41), and Jesus' withdrawal from to preach throughout Galilee (verses 42-44).

Verses 1-2

"Full of the Holy Spirit . . ." The Holy Spirit dwelt without measure in the sinless Christ. Christ was led by the Spirit in the wilderness about forty days, and He ate nothing. "To be tempted by the devil . . ." The view that Christ could have sinned is a view that we have a hard time with mentally, thinking that Christ could have sinned.

The view here is that the capability of Jesus to commit sin was a necessary and inherent result of the incarnation.

"Temptation in Christ indicated the possibility of sin." If it was impossible for Christ to sin, how could there have been any temptation? Christ was tempted in "all points" like as we are tempted, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

“Forty days . . .” The number forty was significant in Israel’s history, that being the number of days Moses fasted, the time Elijah fasted, the number of days of uncleanness following childbirth, and the number of years Egypt was to suffer.

“The devil . . .” The proper name of this being is Satan; and he must be understood not as a mere principle of evil, nor as a personification of iniquity, but as a malignant creature of the very highest order, and one who is the conscious enemy of God and men.

Ezekiel 28:11-19 appears to speak of the origin of Satan. It appears that Satan’s malignant hatred of humanity began in the Garden of Eden. His purpose as the destroyer is evident in every case in which the Holy Scriptures has given any knowledge of it. His strategy of opposing Jesus the Son of God was discernible throughout the whole life of the Savior.

Satan attempted to murder the Christ child, made another attempt to kill Him in this very chapter, and finally, with God’s permission accomplished His death on Calvary. The prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray closes with the line, “Deliver us from the evil one.”

“The wilderness . . .” mentioned here could have been anywhere on the western side of the Jordan River. It was a howling wilderness, alive with wild beasts.

Satan’s approach to the second Adam, Jesus, with regard to eating, is the same strategy that had succeeded in Eden, and reinforced here by circumstances much more favorable to the evil one.

“He hungered . . .” Luke here recorded the condition of Jesus after the forty days had ended; and, by his doing so before relating the series of temptations, plainly indicated that the temptation was not continuous throughout the forty days, but was the climatic aftermath.

“It was more in keeping with the wily cunning of Satan to wait until his intended victim was enfeebled with hunger.”

Verse 3

“If you are the Son of God . . .” This could be taken as an effort on the part of Satan to create a doubt in Jesus’ mind. Note: “If, seems to have the force of since, which would express no doubt.”

“Command that these stones become bread . . .” The temptation here was that of suggesting that Jesus should use His own miraculous power to meet His earthly needs. If Jesus had done it, it would have indicated a failure to rely upon His Father.

Here appears one of the most enticing aspects of temptation. The need which the situation required to be met was genuine, legitimate, and altogether honorable; but Christ did not fall into the error of meeting legitimate need by illegal and forbidden means.

If Christ had met His own physical need by such a miracle as Satan suggested, it would have given Christ an unfair advantage not enjoyed by all other mortals, thus compromising the intent and purpose of the incarnation itself.

It would have pointed away from Jesus’ purpose of saving men from their sins, and toward the alleviation of their earthly and physical needs. “Jesus did not come to supply bread for humanity but to answer their deeper needs.”

Verse 4

“It is written . . .” This is the first recorded words of Jesus’ ministry on earth, this appeal to the Old Testament indicates Jesus’ trust of it as God’s Word, His acceptance of it as divine authority, and His reliance upon it as the only thing needed to thwart the purpose of the devil.

“Man shall not live by bread alone . . .” Important as physical needs assuredly are, man is spiritual, and not merely physical. Materialism concerns itself only with bread; but God never intended this to be the exclusive goal of humanity. (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Verse 5

“Showed Him all the kingdoms of the world,” was probably a visionary experience rather than a case of bodily transport, since Satan would not have

control of the movement of Jesus' body and since there was no one physical locale from which all the world's kingdoms could be seen.

Verse 6

Satan indeed exercises a great authority on earth, but it is illegal and usurped authority. If Jesus had yielded, He would not have won the kingdoms of the world, He would have lost them; and redemption for mankind would have been thwarted.

God rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:26); Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44); and, despite the fact that there was a tawdry, carnal sense in which Satan is indeed the "god of this world," his arrogant boast here was totally false.

Verse 7

"If You worship before me . . ." That Christ was tempted to worship the devil, and yet without sin, has the meaning that temptation itself is not sinful; it is only when temptation is yielded to that sin occurs.

There is a certain kind of trinity discernible in the devil. He is designated the devil, the beast, and the false prophet. (Revelation 20:10) He appears in three guises: a serpent (Revelation 20:2), a lion (1 Peter 5:8), and an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In this series of temptations Satan appeared as a serpent in the first, as a lion in the second, and as an angel of light in the third.

Verse 8

"It is written . . ." Jesus took no notice of the extravagant promise of the devil, rejecting it out of hand as being merely something which God had forbidden in the sacred scriptures. (Deuteronomy 6:13)

In a world so filled with evil, and with the power of Satan admittedly a fearsome thing, which even an arch angel dared not to take lightly (Jude 1:9), the devil's arrogance in the claim that he could help wicked men achieve their goals certainly had an element of truth, as far as men are concerned.

Many a man, through the sacrifice of principle, has moved into some position of power or authority, only to find that the true power lay with Satan.

The true power was not in himself. What was true of many men, however, was in no wise true of Christ.

Verses 9-11

“Set Him on the pinnacle . . .” It is not known exactly what part of the temple was meant by this, but it was evidently a very high portion of it.

It would have been sinful, however, to test willfully in any such manner, a promise of the Father. The Scripture cited by Satan is Psalm 91:11-12. It has been said by Shakespeare to make Antonio (in the Merchant of Venice) say, “The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.”

Verse 12

“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test . . .” This passage of scripture quoted by Jesus, is from Deuteronomy 6:16.

No individual, nor any church or religious fellowship, is authorized to go beyond the things which are written (1 Corinthians 4:6); and the violation of this principle is always of the evil one.

Verse 13

When the devil had completed every temptation he departed. Satan does not assail mortals with a state of constant, invariable pressure, but varies it in order to achieve advantage through surprise.

“Departed from Him until an opportune time . . .” The opportune time may refer to the hour in Gethsemane. This verse along with John 14:30 and Luke 22:52 are not the only times Jesus was tempted. Temptation came when the multitude tried to crown Him king by force and upon many other occasions.

Nothing in the New Testament limits the temptation of Christ to the events here and in Gethsemane. He was tempted “in all points.” (Hebrews 4:15)

These three temptations in their basic appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life repeated the pattern of the temptation of the first Adam and are in essence, the sum of all temptations.

By His magnificent triumph over Satan in this confrontation, Jesus made certain the final victory. When Satan tested Jesus in the three basic areas of temptation, His true character was fully revealed.

Verses 14-15

“News about Him spread . . .” These verses are Luke’s summary of the fame that came to Jesus at the beginning of His ministry. It is not related how many synagogues He visited, or how many towns and villages received Him.

“Praised by all . . .” This doubtless included the recognition by many that Jesus was indeed the Christ, a recognition that came at the very beginning of Christ’s ministry.

JESUS PREACHES AT NAZARETH

Verse 16

“As His custom was . . .” The regular habit of attending formal, public worship was a vital element in the character of the Son of God; and it is simply impossible for any man to “follow in His steps” without doing likewise.

The old virtue of church attendance has been maligned and slandered; but the equivalent of it marked the life of Christ.

“And stood up to read . . .” “The Jews permitted the law and the prophets be read only with the reader standing. Jesus stood to read, and sat to expound.

Verses 17-18

“He opened the book . . .” This was a roll, similar to those that may be seen in Jewish synagogues until this day.

The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, the “poor” including even the rich who know not the Lord, “captives” being primarily those who are taken captive by the devil to do as will (2 timothy 2:26), and the “blind” having certain reference to

such people as the secular and materialistic Pharisees, of whom Jesus said, “I came into this world, that those who do not see may see.” (John 9:39)

Verse 19

To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord . . .” This is a reference to the times of the Messiah, as proved by the word “anointed” used in verse 18.

Verse 20

“Closed the book . . .” The attendant to whom Jesus gave the roll, after reading from it, was a minor official of the synagogue.

“The eyes . . . were fixed upon Him . . .” The intense interest that focused upon Jesus after the reading from Isaiah was probably induced by the choice of the passage read, and the manner of Jesus’ reading it.

Verse 21

Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah, the Spirit-filled, anointed of the Lord, sent to save the people from their sins and to usher in the new age.

Verse 22

The more the people thought of what Jesus had said, the less they appreciated it. The son (as they supposed) of the local carpenter, the Messiah? Such a monstrous proposition as that appeared to be was utterly beyond their comprehension. They totally rejected it.

Verses 23-24

These remarks of Jesus were His response to unfavorable murmurings that developed in the audience. They talked out loud as the meaning of His declaration began to take effect.

Until this day, audiences in Jewish synagogues talk freely out loud during the services.

“Physician, heal yourself . . .” This slander by the people of the Savior never diminished throughout His ministry. “He saved others; He cannot save Himself.” (Matthew 27:42)

“What was done at Capernaum, do here in your home town . . . “ This is a reference to wonders done in that city which were not recorded, but were alluded to in Matthew 11:23.

“No prophet is welcome in his home town . . .” There was more to Nazareth’s rejection than a mere failure to appreciate Jesus; there was also a jealous hospitality deriving from His working wonders in Capernaum instead of their town.

The racial conceit of the chosen people erupted against Jesus. God indeed loved Israel, but He also loved Gentiles; and Jesus promptly cited two examples from the sacred Scriptures of Israel to demonstrate a truth they should already have known.

Verses 25-26

The main point of this verse is that it was a Gentile widow, a Sidonian, to whom Elijah was sent, and not to any widow in Israel. The reason for this choice lay in the unbelief prevalent in Israel of that period, and in the contrasting faith of the widow of Zarephath.

Verse 27

Naaman showed his faith in God by obeying the command of the prophet, being subsequently healed of leprosy, Naaman, of course being another despised Gentile. There is also the inference from Jesus’ mention of the many lepers that it was their unbelief which prevented them from being healed. Both incidents aroused anger and hatred in the hearts of His hearers.

Verse 28

Why were they angry? Jesus had spoken the truth to them, having cited it in their own scriptures.

Verses 29-30

This attempted murder of Jesus was what the Jews called “a rebel’s beating.” “It was somewhat akin to lynch law, it was administered without a trial, and on the spot, when anyone was accused of violating their law or tradition.”

Whether Jesus used any miraculous power in passing through His enemies is not definitely known. Divine power most certainly would have been used if it had been necessary.

CURE OF A DEMONIAK IN CAPERNAUM

Verses 31-32

The astonishment of the people was due to the authority of Jesus' words. His teaching was not patterned after the methods of the Pharisees. He did not bow down before the traditions of the elders, but spoke the truth of God's word regardless of the prejudices of the people.

Verses 33-34

The fact of demon possession is undeniably taught in the gospels. The demon is represented as addressing the Christ by one of His proper titles, and as having knowledge of the destruction that Jesus would bring upon the demonic world.

Verse 35

The threat of the brow of the hill (4:29), corresponds to the pinnacle temptation; the expulsion of the demons (4:35f) to the desire of Satan for Jesus' worship; and the catch of fishes (5:6) to the bread temptation.

Verses 36-37

"Report . . ." "The word thus rendered is *echos*, our word echo" and it reveals the manner of the person-to-person method of spreading the good news about Jesus in that era.

HEALING OF PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER

Verses 38-39

Matthew has, "They brought to Jesus many possessed with demons." (8:16)

Mark has "They came in to the house of Simon and Andrew." (1:29)

Luke here has "they" and "them."

All three authors are saying the same thing. The gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles are true historical records.

Verses 40-41

“When the sun was setting . . .” They brought to Jesus their sick with various diseases and Jesus healed them. The demons were also coming out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Son of God!” Jesus rebuked them and would not allow them to speak because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Christ did not wish to permit the Pharisees an excuse to allege any collusion on His part with demons; and it was premature at that time, for Jesus to declare His Messiahship, except by implication as He did at Nazareth.

Verses 42-44

Capernaum itself refused, at last, to accept the Lord (Matthew 11:23-24); and from this it may be inferred that the desire of the people in this instance was directed more to the possibility of their using Jesus to take care of their ill, than to any serious purpose of accepting His holy teachings.

This verse really summarizes many occasions of Jesus’ teaching throughout Galilee.

CHAPTER 5

Events narrated in this chapter are the wonderful drawing in of a fish net full of fish (verse 1-11), the healing of a leper (verse 12-16), the cure of the man borne by four (verse 17-26), the call of Matthew (verse 27-28), complaints by the Pharisees and following discussion (verse 29-31).

THE WONDERFUL DRAWING IN OF THE FISH NET

Verses 1-3

It had been an unsuccessful night of fishing and the men about to be called to the apostleship were cleaning up their gear and getting ready to store it against the next fishing trip.

With marvelous insight, Jesus accomplished several things at once. By using one of the boats as a pulpit, he could avoid the press of the throng; and, by means of the great catch a little later, He would provide further insight for the men about to be called to accompany Him as apostles.

Jesus saw two boats at the edge of the lake and He got into one of them, sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat.

Verse 4

“Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Their acceptance of the call was a launching out into the deep on a far grander scale than anything they could have done in Peter’s boat.

Every Christian and all churches still need this commandment to, “Put out into the deep.” It is a shame for Jesus’ church to make small plans, dream small dreams, and project little victories.

The issues of time and eternity for all men in all generations are big issues; let God’s people heed the admonition to “launch out into the deep.”

Verse 5

It was not a good time to fish; the men were tired; they were cleaning up; and it could not have been an altogether welcome command from Jesus, who said in effect, “Come on. Let’s go fishing!”

Verse 6

Peter had fully complied with the Lord’s command to let down the nets. If there was any such deficiency on the disciple’s part, it was surely rebuked by the size of the catch.

Verse 7

Such an astonishing wonder was a fitting prelude to the call of these fishermen to become “fishers of men.” The element of cooperation should not be overlooked. The great things are always accomplished by men working together.

Verse 8

“For I am a sinful man . . .” Peter confessed the sin which had been evident in his grudging obedience a little earlier. Mere obedience, attended by a critical, complaining attitude is not true obedience. Those who follow the Savior should do so with joy, without any of the reservations and rumbling complaints which seem to mark the service of some.

Our is a privileged and joyful service; our lives are directed by the Lord whose love and blessing are without limit; our personal judgments and reluctant attitudes should be utterly abandoned; and there is for the child of God no happiness like that of doing exactly what the Lord commanded.

“Fell down at Jesus’ feet . . .” This spontaneous act of worship on Peter’s part should be noted. Christ received His worship, the reception of such a thing being an implicit claim of deity on the Savior’s part. All of the apostles concurred in thus hailing Jesus as God among men.

Verses 9-10

This was the instant of their being called into a new and higher relationship with Jesus as apostles. Elements which aided their decision were:

1. The consciousness of Jesus’ miraculous power.
2. A vision of something greater, “You shall catch men.”
3. A consciousness of sin.

Only Peter acknowledged sin here; but it may be that the others were equally guilty of the same attitude.

Verse 11

Luke reported that Christ’s call was directed particularly to Simon; but both Jesus and the men called understood it as including others in addition to Simon.

HEALING OF A LEPER

Verse 12

The dreadful disease of leprosy left its victim in a totally pitiable condition without hope of any earthly cure. The fact that some so afflicted sought Jesus’ aid indicated the popular conception that Jesus was a man of supernatural power.

This dreaded malady was a type of sin in the Old Testament; and although there were instances of its being sent as punishment for sin (2 Kings 5:27), it also occurred independently of sin.

Verse 13

To touch a leper resulted in the ceremonial defilement of the one who touched; but Jesus did not hesitate to incur such defilement on behalf of those whom He came to deliver.

Christ's cures were instantaneous, done without effort on His part, and free of the type of incantations, ostentatious prayers, and hysterical behavior associated with so-called healings today. His were real, immediate, and designed to demonstrate His heavenly power.

Verse 14

"Tell no man . . ." This meant the he should tell no man at that time; because Christ fully intended that it be made know to the priests as a testimony to them.

Verse 15

The development in view here was the pressing unto Him of such vast concourses of people with their incessant demands so much so that it became physically impossible for Christ to continue.

The foreknowledge of such a situation might have been one of the reasons underlying His charge that the leper should "tell no man." He apparently spread the word anyway; and, as a result, Christ found it necessary to depart.

Verse 16

"To the wilderness . . ." In biblical times, these were merely uninhabited places, not arid desolations in the sense of the word as used today.

"And pray . . ." The reliance of Jesus upon God, and His constant dependence upon the Father's will appear throughout the New Testament in the vigorous pursuit of prayer, which marked His holy life.

HEALING OF THE MAN BORNE BY THE FOUR

Verse 17

Here is a glimpse of the astounding effect the words and works of Jesus that were already produced.

The religious hierarchy was by this time fully alert to the challenge of Jesus' life and teachings; and their hostility made itself evident at every opportunity.

Verse 18

Mark related that there were four men who bore their friend to Jesus and recorded their breaking of the tiles. Such urgency on the part of a sufferer could have been caused only by the most overwhelming conviction on their part that Jesus could indeed heal him.

Verse 19

All three (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) recount this event, but each brought to it his own contribution of significant detail.

Verse 20

Not the faith of the sufferer, but the faith of those who bore him, is in focus here. Christ never followed any stereotyped pattern in the discharge of His glorious mission.

No sufferer would have allowed such inconvenience to himself and his friends unless he too had faith that Jesus would heal him; nevertheless, it was the faith of the group, not that of the individual, that Jesus noted.

“Friend, your sins are forgiven you . . .” Christ no doubt intended this to be a challenge of the religious doctors present in such large numbers; and, therefore, upon grounds fully known to Himself alone, He announced the man's pardon of all transgressions.

Verse 21

“Speaks blasphemies . . .” The reasoning of the Pharisees was a syllogism:

Only God can forgive sins. This man is not God. Therefore, He is blaspheming by saying that He forgives sin.

Their second, or minor premise, was wrong; and therefore their conclusion was wrong. Jesus indeed was, and ever is God; but this they did not believe. Their major premise, to the effect that only God can forgive sins, was absolutely correct.

Verse 22

It is clear that Jesus was reading the thoughts of His audience.

Verse 23

Jesus admitted that the so-called granting of absolution is on an absolute parity with performing a miracle. Anyone who can do either can do both; and he who cannot do both can do neither. Note: It does seem that with such a proposition so boldly stated here, there should be an end of men saying, "I absolve you!"

Verse 24

Christ thus gave the most dramatic proof of His authority both to heal men's bodies and to forgive sins. "Rise, and take up your stretcher and go home."

Verse 25

For the second time in this chapter, Jesus directed the most visible and convincing proof of His oneness with the Father toward the community of the scribes and Pharisees, making every effort to enlist them as believers in His holy mission.

From John it is learned, however, that they had already rejected Him and were merely stalking Him with a view of putting Him to death. (John 5:18)

"Glorifying God . . ." The healed man was aware that only God could have wrought such a wonder; and the same conclusion should have been made by Jesus' enemies.

Verse 26

"Were all seized with astonishment . . ." It is to be assumed that the same group refused to glorify God in this instance.

"We have seen remarkable things today . . ." How remarkable it was! That Almighty God should have become a man, concerning Himself with the pitiful ailments of the flesh, and even forgiving the sins of His fallen children. It is the most remarkable, most wonderful thing that ever happened.

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

The balance of his chapter is related to the call of the apostle Matthew and discussions that arose at the dinner he made for Jesus.

Verses 27-28

“Levi . . .” This son of Alphaeus was a Hebrew with two names, a common thing in Galilee at that time. Mark and Luke speak of him as Levi, but Matthew himself used the name that has been loved throughout the Christian era.

The speculation that Jesus gave Levi the name “Matthew,” meaning “Gift of God,” is not unreasonable; for Jesus also gave Simon the name, “Peter.”

“Publican . . .” is a word applied to tax collectors; and, in Palestine at that time, the occupation itself was hated by the Jews. They particularly despised any of their own people who consented to such work for Roman usurpers.

There is little doubt that the vast majority of holders of such an office enriched themselves through extortion and oppression. There is no hint that Matthew was like them.

Jesus’ call of such a social outcast was His purpose of redeeming all men. Jesus did not look upon outward appearances but at the genuine character of men.

Matthew was a “gift of God” indeed, to the Christian faith.

His scholarly knowledge of the Old Testament, his intimate understanding of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and his ability to penetrate the sham of the religious hierarchy of that era fully endowed him with unique gifts which enabled the writing of the first gospel.

“He left everything behind . . . and began to follow Him.” Just as Luke passed over without mention of the prior contact of Simon, James and John with Jesus, the assumption that he did the same thing here is justified.

Verses 29-30

One of the very best ways to begin Christian service is the method chosen here by Matthew. He gave a big dinner, invited many, and introduced the Savior, thus committing himself publicly and irrevocably to the new way of life. No man can

sneak into the service of God; and inevitable failure attends all who try to do so. Matthew did it right!

The Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble at Jesus disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax-gathers and sinners?”

Verse 31

Jesus answered, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.”

This was not an admission by Jesus that the Pharisees were “in health” spiritually; for truly their moral sickness was the scandal of that age. Of course, they viewed themselves as righteous.

Verse 32

Jesus said, “He had not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.”

Verses 33-35

“They said to Him . . .” the disciples of John often fast and offer prayers and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same, but Yours eat and drink.”

This was an effort by the Pharisees to open a conflict between Jesus and John the Baptist; but Christ’s inspired reply made use of John’s statement regarding Christ as “the bridegroom,” and extending it a little with the effect of saying, “Look, this is a wedding; and all of the rules on fasting are suspended!” The background of this answer included the notorious behavior of the Pharisees themselves whose gluttonous conduct at weddings was a public scandal.

“When the bridegroom is taken away . . .” Those vicious enemies would yet nail Him up to die and He knew it; thus, there is this plaintive reference to the time when the bridegroom shall be taken away. This was a clear prophecy of His Passion, His crucifixion.

Verses 36-39

Jesus begins to tell them a parable using three comparisons:

1. New cloth on an old garment.
2. New wine in old wine-skins.

3. No man having drunk old wine desires new.

The meaning in all three is very similar and they stress Jesus' unwillingness to make the ceremonial fasts of the Old Testament a large feature of the new kingdom, the necessity of finding new "wine-skins" (disciples) who would be able to receive His new teaching, and Jesus' understanding of the fact that many of John's disciples would prefer the old ways to the new methods of the approaching kingdom.

The variations between Matthew and Luke derive from Luke's fuller report. Whereas Matthew mentioned patching the old garment with the new cloth," Luke has the fuller account of the "new cloth" having been torn from a "new garment." Matthew abbreviated the discussion, even omitting altogether the third analogy given by Luke. Regarding the fundamental reasons for such variations, they resulted from:

1. The fact that Jesus Himself varied His parables, illustrations, and teachings from place to place and time to time.
2. Another source of variations in the gospels was in the choice of materials by the sacred authors, some selecting parables, some sayings, etc., not found in the others; and also in the particular stress or emphasis intended by the authors.

The newness of the kingdom of Christ was not to be merely a patch imposed upon Judaism, not a refilling of old forms with vital new truth.

"New wine . . . new garments. . ." Here was a glimpse of the truth stressed by the apostles, "The old things passed away; behold; new things have come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Chapter 6

Luke's account in this chapter reveals, how Jesus refuted the false charge of Sabbath breaking. (Verses 1-5) Jesus angered the Pharisees by healing a man with the withered hand on another Sabbath day (Verses 6-11), Jesus' appointment of the apostles after a night of prayer (Verses 12-19), and gives the content of one of Jesus' sermons. (Verses 20-49)

Verse 1

“On a Sabbath . . .” There is strong textual evidence that this should read, “on a second–first Sabbath.”

There were definitely two first-Sabbaths recognized by the Jews: One at the commencement of the civil year, which would be called first-first, and the other at the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, called second-first.

“Picking and eating the heads of wheat . . . rubbing them in their hands.” What Jesus’ disciples did was legal, being specifically permitted. (Deuteronomy 23:25) “It was lawful to eat grain when walking through another man’s field.” The charge of illegality had regard to when this occurred, and not to what occurred.

Verse 2

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” A cessation of all work was required, travel suspended, except for short distances; and all chores, such as gathering sticks, were forbidden.

To the divine regulations, the Pharisees had added dozens of others, resulting in the most ridiculous requirements.

In their view Jesus’ disciples were guilty of “reaping” by plucking the ears, “threshing” by rubbing them in their hands, and “carrying burdens” by conveying the grains to the mouth. It should be clearly understood, then, that what Jesus was charged with violating was not God’s Word.

It was the legal foolishness of the Pharisees. Both Christ and His disciples were totally innocent of these false charges.

Verses 3-4

The purpose of Christ in this citation was not to equate His actions with those of David. David’s actions were not lawful—Jesus’ actions involved no guilt whatever.

The Lord in this appeal to the Scriptures stressed the unfairness, hypocrisy, and deceit of the Pharisees, who improperly accepted David’s illegal actions as allowable, freely admitting that David’s deeds required no reproof; but who

nevertheless falsely charged Jesus and His disciples with the capital offense of Sabbath breaking, basing it on actions completely innocent.

Verse 5

There were a number of arguments by which Jesus responded to the Pharisees' false charge.

1. He showed the biased and unprincipled motives of those making the charge.
2. He showed that "on the Sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless," and that "One greater than the temple" was among them. (Matthew 12:5-6)
3. He showed that the spirit of the ancient law of God should have been heeded, not merely the letter of it. (Matthew 12:7)

To make the conveyance of a spoonful of wheat to the mouth a violation of God's Sabbath, as carrying a burden was contrary to the spirit of God's law; and, if the Pharisees had heeded the spirit of it, they would not have condemned Jesus' innocent disciples.

4. Jesus also taught that keeping the Sabbath day "holy" was not intended to be fulfilled merely by what men did not do on that day, but by what they actually did.
5. Jesus claimed absolute lordship of the Sabbath.

In the Greek, "Lord" comes first in the sentence, and so is emphatic. He controls the Sabbath instead of being controlled by it. In the Jewish mind, this was tantamount to claiming deity. Jesus did not in these words set aside the law. He interpreted it in its true meaning.

Jesus' lordship over the Sabbath was not in order to violate it, but to uplift it and free it from the folly of human abuse and to restore it as a blessing to mankind. "The true Sabbath rest," is found in Him; it begins here in rest for the soul, and ends hereafter in the eternal rest.

6. “The Sabbath was made for man and man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)

What is true of the Sabbath is true of all of God’s laws. They were not given to hinder and limit mankind, but to free and bless mankind.

NOTE: A somewhat fuller treatment of this question has been offered here because, of all the passages in the New Testament, this has become the most popular in the theology of those who reduce Christianity to a basic humanism, the major premise of which is this: “If human needs are restricted by God’s law, it is God’s law that should be set aside; and of course, “human needs” refers actually to “human wants!” This is the great error of our generation.

ANOTHER SABBATH CONFRONTATION

Verses 6-7

This miracle was performed under test conditions, with the avowed enemies of Jesus present and observing it. There seems to have been no doubt at all on the part of the Pharisees that Jesus would heal this man; they only wondered if He would do it on the Sabbath.

Verses 8-9

“He knew their thoughts . . .” The clear intention of Luke, in these words, was that of showing the omniscience (all knowing) of Jesus. (John 2:25)

“To save a life or to destroy it . . .” The Old Testament plainly taught that the life, even of a beast which had fallen into a pit, could be saved on the Sabbath; and Jesus extended the principle, as should have been obvious to the Pharisees, as applicable to men also.

Here too is a subtle appeal to their consciences. The Pharisees had already decided to kill Jesus; and here they were, on a Sabbath day, laying a net to capture Jesus with the intent of killing Him; and yet they would allege sin against Jesus for healing a man on that same day.

“While Jesus was saving life on the Sabbath, they were using the Sabbath to take counsel how they might destroy Him.” (Donald Miller, *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*)

Verses 10-11

“They were filled with rage . . .” Those religious bigots were out of their rational minds with malicious fury. Why were they so angry?

1. Because Jesus had shown His power to work a miracle.
2. Because Jesus had done so in contradiction of their rules.
3. Because Jesus had thus proved that He was from God, making them wrong in their interpretations.
4. Because Jesus had openly condemned their views.
5. Because Jesus had done these things in the sight of the multitudes.

Evidently Jesus deliberately challenged the religious hierarchy on the question of their Sabbath regulations.

There were seven of these Sabbatical wonders.

1. Curing the demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum. (Mark 1:21)
2. Healing Simon’s wife’s mother. (Mark 1:29)
3. Healing of the man at Bethesda. (John 5:9)
4. Curing this man with the withered hand. (Luke 6:6)
5. Giving sight to the man born blind. (John 9:14)
6. Curing the woman with a spirit of infirmity. (Luke 13:14)
7. Healing the man with dropsy. (Luke 14:1)

NAMING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Verse 12

Jesus, the God-man, continued all night in prayer, who is there among His followers who need not to continue steadfastly in prayers?

“Every great undertaking in our lives should be preceded by a season of solitude and prayer. This will assure us of God’s presence and power in our undertakings.” (Frank L. Cox, According to Luke)

Verses 13-16

“Whom also He named apostles . . .” The word “apostle” means “a person sent forth” in the preaching of the gospel to the whole world. (Matthew 14:9) This title would never have been accepted by the primitive church unless Jesus had indeed given it.

The apostles were Simon, whom Jesus also called Peter, whose name appears first in all New Testament lists of the twelve.

In addition to Peter, there was Andrew, James, John, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, (not the father of Matthew), Simon, who was called the Zealot, Judas the son of James and Judas Iscariot.

There was a revolutionary group in those days which bore the title “Zealot” but there is no proof that “Simon the Zealot” was a former member of a terrorist group dedicated to the overthrow of Rome. (The term “Zealot” probably indicted one with a particular zeal for the law.)

Verses 17-19

There is no way to view this as a report of the same sermon Matthew recorded.

This sermon was on the “plain;” Matthew’s on the mountain. Here Jesus stood, there He sat. This sermon has thirty verses in the record; Matthew’s has over a hundred.

THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN

Verse 20

“Blessed are you who are poor . . .” The poor of this earth are blessed in that they are not so much tempted to trust in riches which they do not have.

“The Kingdom of God . . .” This is the same as “Kingdom of Heaven” elsewhere in the New Testament.

Verse 21

Christ here pointed out that the hungry of earth are to be enriched by His teachings, that the alleviation of their hunger shall follow the acceptance of His message.

The best good news the hungry ever had is that they shall eat. Wherever Christ is preached, there the hardships of the poor are relieved.

Verse 22

Jesus had in view the antagonism between light and darkness, the inevitable hatred of the carnal man of all that is holy and spiritual.

“For the sake of the Son of Man . . .” It is not merely “the hated” who are blessed, but those who are hated because of their acceptance of the Son of man as Lord and Savior.

Trench noted: In no single passage of the New Testament where “Son of man” occurs (and there are eighty-eight in all) does it mean other than the Messiah, the Man in whom the idea of humanity was altogether fulfilled. (Richard Trench, *op. cit.*, p. 344)

Verse 23

“Your reward is great in heaven . . .” The reason that the poor and the hungry are blessed, in the last analysis, flows out of the eternal reward stored up for them that love the Lord (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

If one should take the hope of heaven out of the New Testament, there would be nothing left.

Verses 24-26

Regarding the four “woes” Jesus uttered here, Boles said: These words are not the expression of anger, but of lamentation and warning, “Woe unto you,” or “alas for you!” Jesus is not uttering condemnation as a judge; but as the Great Teacher and Prophet, He declares the miserable condition of certain classes and warns them against it. (H. Leo Boles, *op. cit.*, p. 136)

Here again, it is the eternal fate of men who live for money, food, entertainment, and fame which is in focus. This is not the prophecy of some social revolution that will destroy the rich, etc., but it is a warning of the final judgment.

“The false prophets . . .” The thrust of these verses 20 and 24 is directed at the apostles themselves. There appears a contrast between the holy apostles who

have become poor, leaving all that they had and the false prophets who were made rich by their sacrifice of truth and through pandering to the depraved desires of rebellious Israel.

Verses 27-29

The principles taught here are non-resistance to evil, the overcoming of evil with good, and patient submissiveness to encroachments against one's personal rights.

Ours is an era when men are screaming demands for their "rights," but the Christian way includes the renunciation of rights rather, rather than the violent defense of them.

Verses 30-31

Verses 27-31, have some of the most difficult teaching ever presented by the Son of God.

The principals of non-resistance to evil, submission to wrongs, and refraining from retaliation should be honored by Christians in whatever situation it is possible to do so.

The Golden Rule (verse 31), as stated in Luke is, "And just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way."

Our Lord was the first to state the ethic affirmatively, thus making the doing of positive good to be the ideal, rather than merely refraining from doing evil.

Verses 32-35

Jesus expects His disciples to demonstrate a quality of love, helpfulness, and compassion that exceeds everything that may be observed in the conduct of the natural man.

The higher quality of life must be visible in the total activity of the Christian. In such things as inviting guests, entertaining, giving favors, accommodating others—the way Christ includes extension of such hospitality and entertainment beyond the circle of kinsfolks, friends and acquaintances.

One of the saddest things in any church is to see the same circle of friends entertaining themselves over and over without any regard to broadening the base of the relationship.

Verses 35-36

This teaching is an order for Christians to break out of themselves and their own little bunch and to include others in all of their plans and activities.

“Love your enemies . . .” Two Greek words are regularly translated “love” in the New Testament. One, “*phileo*,” relates basically to warm personal affection. The other, “*agape*,” means rational good will and recognition of the value of its object. It is the second word, “*agapo*,” which is used throughout this section.

Thus, the Christian love of enemies is that which designs and intends what is best for enemies, even enemies being, in the sight of God, subject to the invitation of the gospel and prospective heirs of everlasting life.

“Be merciful . . .” This means compassionate and pitying.

The employment of it in this context indicates that the clannishness and exclusiveness so severely condemned above actually derives from a lack of pity toward the ones slighted.

Verse 37

“Do not pass judgment . . .” The injunction against judging is amplified by two negative commands, “judge not,” and “condemn not,” and by two positive commands, “forgive” and “give.”

“Pardon and you will be pardoned.” Do not hold an attitude of vengeance, or keep account of some injury with a view to retaliation.

Verse 38

“Give . . .” If there is a single word in the Bible that summarizes the Christian life, it is the word “give.”

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35) The measure of the holy life is not getting but giving.

“Pressed down, shaken together . . .” The metaphor here is a measure of grain, the application being to a measure given, as well as a measure purchased.

Short changing the purchaser by making “the bushel smaller” was condemned by God’s prophet. (Amos 8:5)

It is sinful for Christians to skim their giving to the church and to individuals who should be aided.

“Whatever measure you deal out to others will be measured to you. . .” The double application of this gives promise of God’s special blessings upon persons honoring His word.

VARIOUS TRUTHS (MAXIMS)

Verse 39

This truism was uttered especially against the false religious leaders. (Matthew 15:14; 23:19, 24) The essential message of it is that men should be careful not to follow religious leaders who themselves are blind spiritually. (John 9:39f)

Verse 40

This saying also was frequently used by the Lord to teach various lessons at different times and places.

Jesus also varied the form of the maxim, using it to foretell the slander of the apostles by unbelievers, to encourage the apostles in the performance of service, and to prophecy the persecutions that will come upon them. (Matthew 10:24, John 13:16, John 15:20)

Verses 41-42

Of course, it would be literally impossible for a man with a plank in his eye to probe for the mote in his brother’s eye; but in the moral and spiritual realm such a thing is going on all the time. Big Guilt always yells the loudest about the mistakes of Little Guilt!

True morality demands that such conduct wear the label with which Jesus branded it—hypocrisy! (Matthew 7:5) Note also that “a mote” (a very small particle) may be a very detrimental thing, despite the small size of it.

Therefore, there is nothing in Jesus’ comparison to minimize any moral fault, however insignificant on the surface. A mote in the eye may be a disaster.

Verses 43-44

In Matthew 7:17-20, this teaching was applied to the identification of false teachers. No corrupt teacher can produce desirable results.

It would be as logical to expect a bucket of figs to grow on a thorn bush as to expect holy and beneficial results to follow from a teacher who is not faithful to the word of God.

Social excellence, eloquent speech, personable appearance, fashionable attire, and charming demeanor on the part of a teacher are not sufficient reasons for following one who does not know, or will not proclaim, the true word of God.

Verse 45

It is not the appearance of men, but their hearts, which determine their character and the unfailing guide to what is in men’s heart is their speech.

“Out of the good treasure . . .” The heart provides the motivation of life; and what is in it will invariably manifest itself. Of course, the mind is the spiritual heart.

Verse 46

It is not in mere believing, nor in mere profession of faith, nor in the acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord, that salvation is received; but it is through doing the things He commanded.

This fundamental truth has been compromised and negated by religious theories from the Reformation to the present time; but the scriptures cannot be broken. There is no substitute for doing what Jesus commanded. (Matthew 7:21)

Why Call Me Lord, Lord, and Do Not Do What I Say?

This question should burn in human hearts till the deeds of men more nearly resemble the faith professed. This question is not merely an interrogation; it is an indictment, charging men with the unbelievable inconsistency of disobeying Him whom they acknowledge as Lord.

Jesus did not here charge His hearers with the lack of faith, but with lack of action, there being not the slightest suggestion that any of them were unbelievers. Thus is emphasized the timeless truth that “while unbelievers must be lost, believers may also be lost.

Ours is a generation which has accepted “faith only” as the “open sesame” of the gate of heaven; but “faith only” was not enough for the first generation that ever tried it; nor is it enough today.

The doctrine of salvation by “faith alone” was born during the Reformation when civilization was in the struggle and travail of rebirth from the deadness of the Dark Ages; but, in all ages, the philosophy of merely believing has had its practical adherents. The generation to whom Jesus addressed this question was believers, but they were not doers of God’s will.

Today, men not only say, “Lord, Lord, and do not...” but they go further and preach that it is not necessary to do anything.

If one of these ancient sinners had been reproached for not being baptized, taking the Lord’s Supper, or belonging to the church, he would have been embarrassed and might have some promise of doing Jesus’ will; but today, sinners reject altogether the necessity of obedience on the grounds that they “believe!”

Yet, look again at this crowd that heard Jesus. Their everlasting shame sprang not from lack of faith, but lack of action.

Not only were they believers; they were confessors of His name, calling Him, Lord, Lord. Theirs was no mere historical faith, but they truly acknowledged Him as the Messiah; and in this they were correct. It is wonderful for men to say, “Lord, Lord; for with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10)

In confessing Christ those people had joined the ranks of the privileged; and from them Jesus had a right to expect obedience.

Not only were they believers and confessors, they were also religious workers, not idlers in any sense, being, in fact, busy with many things. It was precisely this class of persons Jesus had in mind when He said: “Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out

demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?” “And I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.” (Matthew 7:22-23) From this it is clear that the people reproached by Jesus in this text were (1) believers, (2) confessing believers, and (3) working believers. What was their fatal sin? It was as simple as it was catastrophic: they did not do the will of the Lord.

Of what did such a failure consist? The question is not merely academic, for the spiritual children of those multitudes are indeed legion.

1. Some do not His will because they are idle, doing nothing of any spiritual import.
2. Others do not His will because they are doing their “own thing.” Walking after their own lusts and denying the promise of His coming. (2 Peter 3:3-4)
3. Multitudes do not His will because they are busy obeying the commandments of men, or as Jesus said, “Teaching for doctrines the commandments of Men.” (Matthew 15:9)

In a word, it is not enough to believe in Christ, to profess His holy religion, and to be busy here and there with religious activities. To win the everlasting reward, men must do the will of Christ as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Even the fullest possible compliance with all Jesus’ commands does not earn or merit salvation, which in the last analysis rests upon the gracious mercy of God; but willful disobedience thwarts even that mercy.

Verses 47-49

“My words . . .” People who build upon Jesus’ words build upon the solid rock; people who build upon anything else are doomed to disappointment. The word of Christ alone is the constitution of the church, the ground of eternal hope, the guide of faith, the source of redemption, and the true wisdom of God. All else is shifting sand.

An infinite sadness follows the contemplation of religious precepts and traditions which have been incorporated into the historical church, traditions

and doctrines which are no part of the Savior's teaching, being contrary to it and refuted by it.

If men indeed hope to receive eternal life, they must receive it of Christ and upon the terms laid down by Him.

Chapter 7

Luke brings the love of Christ into sharp focus in this chapter, along with the ethic derived from it, namely, that it is in the love of God and the love of man that a soul may hope to commend itself to the Lord.

First, there is the centurion who loved his servant (Verse 1-10); then, Jesus showed his love for the bereaved by raising the son the widow Nain (Verse 11-17); next, Jesus offered His love of the afflicted and the poor as proof of His Messiahship to John the Baptist's deputation. (Verses 18-23)

Following this, Jesus discussed the mission of John the Baptist, laying stress on the publicans and harlots who accepted John's message (Verses 24-35) and then, He gave the explanation of how publicans and harlots were saved and the Pharisees were not, this explanation growing out of a dinner in the house of a Pharisee. (Verses 36-50)

HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

Verse 1

A great deal of Jesus' teaching was done in Capernaum, which was His residence for a long while; and the event of our Lord's finishing a discourse at some place near the city and then returning to the place where He stayed must have occurred often.

Verse 2

"Centurion . . ." Counting the two centurions of these miracles (the one here, and the other in Matthew) as but one man, there are no less than eight centurions mentioned in the New Testament and all of them appear in a favorable light.

“Servant . . . “The word here is “bondservant” or slave; and it is evident that Luke recorded this for the purpose of showing the centurion’s love for such a person. “He did not despise slaves as other Gentiles commonly did.”

Some sought the aid of Jesus for a son, or a daughter, or for themselves; but this man came to Jesus on behalf of a slave.

Verse 3

“And when he had heard . . .” A vast number of Jesus’ deeds were done in Capernaum. (Matthew 11:23)

The “hearing” would have included the very words and attitude by which the first centurion had approached the Lord; and the second would have adopted the approach which was so successful with the first.

“The elders . . .” The first centurion was a heathen; this one was evidently some kind of proselyte to Judaism; for it is hard to believe that he would have built the Jews a synagogue unless he had been a follower of Judaism.

Verses 4-5

Clearly, the centurion had remained at home (verse 6), and the Jewish elders actually bore the request to Jesus.

“Our synagogue . . .” Note: The ruins of Capernaum show the ruins of a synagogue. It was a beautiful structure, built of white limestone. It shows by its architecture that it was built in the time of the Herods.

There is little doubt that it is the one which this pious Gentile erected, and in which Jesus taught and healed.

Thus God raised up a devout Gentile to provide a platform from which many of the marvelous teachings of the Lord would be announced. (John 6:59)

How strange it is that this Roman centurion, a Gentile, and an officer in the hated army of the oppressors, should have received such a commendation as the Jewish elders in Capernaum delivered to Jesus on his behalf.

Verse 6

This is clearly a different circumstance from that of the miracle in Matthew, as the next verses emphasize.

Verse 7

Such faith as that shown by the centurion is remarkable indeed.

“Say the word . . .” It is an attitude of God that His word alone is sufficient unto all things. “Let them praise the name of the Lord. For He commanded and they were created.” (Psalm 148:5)

It is amazing that this centurion understood this as being true of Jesus. The next verse shows how he had arrived at such a conclusion.

Verse 8

Having in his possession the knowledge of how Jesus' word had wrought many cures, this centurion, like his fellow officer, had come to recognize God come in the flesh.

A greater miracle of healing than this is nowhere recorded in the gospels. Without even seeing the sufferer, without touch of hand, or look of eye, our Lord restored health to a dying man.

He spoke and the sick were cured. He commanded, and the disease departed.

Verses 9-11

It does not appear that the centurion even came into the presence of the Lord, physically; but, disclaiming for himself any worthiness that Jesus might come under his roof, he nevertheless received Him in his heart, which was a far more glorious reception.

“Not even in Israel . . .” That Jesus placed this centurion's faith above all that He had seen in Israel is significant.

“He marveled . . .” It is not recorded very often that Jesus marveled.

Accepting this account as a second miracle done for the benefit of a centurion would also fit the evident purpose of Luke of giving two instances of Jesus' mightiest deeds, rather than one.

RAISING OF THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

Nain is located on the northwestern edge of 'Little Hermon.' Just east of the city are the ruins of rock sepulchers; and the extensive ruins disprove the notion that the place was merely "a humble village of mud-built houses near Nazareth."

"Came about soon afterwards . . ." This may mean the very next day. Amazingly, only Luke recorded this wonder, the sacred authors having been more certainly restrained by the Spirit of God in what they included or left out.

Verse 12

"The gate of the city . . ." does not indicate that the city had a wall. It refers rather to "the opening between the houses, by which the road entered the town."

Verse 13

"Do not weep . . ." It was not possible, at the moment, for this bereaved widow to respond to such a command; but the Lord never gave a command without supplying the power to obey it. Christians of all ages: "Sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

Verse 14

"Touched the coffin . . ." Thus Jesus defied the ceremonial defilement forbidding such a thing; because the dead could not defile Him, but conversely He raised the dead!

"Young man I say to you arise . . ." This corresponds exactly, except for the salutation, with what Jesus said to the daughter of Jairus. (Mark 5:41)

Verse 15

The power of the Son of God is truly infinite. That a dead body should respond to the command of Jesus is a wonder of such magnitude as to numb the senses of all who contemplate it.

Jesus here obviously restored the young man to his former condition in life. These miracles of Jesus were different from the resurrection of the Lord. He rose to an eternal existence which He already possessed; those whom He raised to the life they had previously possessed, but still subject to mortality.

Verse 16

“Fear gripped them . . .” This was the natural result of such a miracle. The souls of men, tremble when conscious of the presence of God; and such a presence had clearly demonstrated itself at the gate of Nain.

Verse 17

“Went out all over Judea’ . . .” This is inclusive of the entire domain of the Herod’s (Antipas and Agrippa 1) with “the region round about,” thus having reference to the whole of what is today called Palestine.

Nor should it be left unnoticed that this miracle was wrought within a very few miles of Nazareth; whose citizens refused to believe in Jesus. This miracle was close enough that they could not have avoided knowing it happened.

Note: There is a progression in the New Testament resurrections. The daughter of Jairus had been dead but a little while; this son of the widow was dead a longer period, the body being carried to the tomb; and Lazarus was dead and buried four days!

All of the resurrections Jesus did (except His own) have this in common, that no word has come down to posterity of what any of them said concerning the state of the death from which they were rescued.

THE DEPUTATION FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST

Verses 18-19

John’s uncertainly is understandable. He had publicly identified Jesus as the Christ; but the Savior’s Messiahship was not being proclaimed with the dogmatic certainty which John might have expected; therefore, he did with his doubts what every true believer in Christ should always do, that is, he brought them to Jesus who answered and relieved them.

When God’s children are in doubt, let them search the word of the Lord.

“Are You the One who is coming . . .?” Humanity must have a Savior; God promised one; and, if Jesus is not the Savior, then who is?

John did not say, "Are You the One who is coming?" or, "Do we look for someone else?"

Verses 20-21

Jesus' answer to John was twofold, including (1) a demonstration of His Messianic power (as here), and (2) a verbal reiteration of it in the next two verses. John the Baptist performed no miracles (John 10:41); and this out flashing of Jesus' miraculous power must have been very impressive to John's disciples.

Verses 22-23

One passage which Jesus clearly had in mind was Isaiah 35:5, in which the prophet foretold the Messianic age. Thus Jesus answered John plainly, but not too plainly, that He was indeed the Christ.

"The dead are raised up . . ." has reference to a plurality of resurrections; and there is proof that not all such wonders have been recorded by the sacred authors. Long after the synoptic gospels were written, John recorded the raising of Lazarus; and there may have been many others whom the Lord raised to life from the dead.

"Blessed is he . . ." Jesus expected John to continue in faith; and the passage immediately afterward indicates that Jesus knew he would continue.

JESUS' EULOGY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Verse 24

Jesus meant by this that John was not a vacillating popularity seeker, preaching only those things that fitted the popular mood, a weather-vane type of preacher, pointing in all directions like a reed in the wind.

Verse 25

The rugged nature of the mighty John was well known, as well as his garment of camel's hair, noted for its discomfort.

Verse 26

These eulogistic remarks were spoken by Jesus after John's disciples had departed. They were therefore offered for the enlightenment of the multitude,

and not for any purpose of flattering John. John was more than a prophet in that he was the herald of the Christ, a man of the most magnificent spiritual dimensions.

Verses 27-28

Thus Jesus identified John the Baptist as the “Elijah” who was to come (Malachi 3:1ff), and as the herald of King Jesus.

“Greater than he . . .” This seemingly paradoxical statement is resolved by the considerations (1) that John the Baptist was not in the kingdom of Christ, the same not being set up till after John’s death, and (2) that the term “greater” has reference to privilege, rather than to character.

Verses 29-30

In the preparatory phase of the kingdom of God, no less than in its reality after Pentecost, refusal to be baptized was here pointed out by Jesus as a “rejection” of God’s council.

Water baptism is one of the elements of the new birth, the being “born of water” to which Jesus referred in His interview with Nicodemus.

It is therefore true in the present era that failure to heed Christ’s command that all men should be baptized is no less a rejection of God’s will now than it was when those ancient Pharisees and lawyers rejected it.

It is in fact a greater rejection, because John’s baptism was only water baptism, the Holy Spirit not having at that time been given: whereas, the baptism of the great commission is followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit. Moreover the conceit that men may receive God’s Spirit while rejecting His baptism is refuted in this passage.

The new birth, without which none shall see the kingdom of God, includes “being born of water,” although that is not the totality of it.

In this passage lies the reason why the publicans and harlots entered God’s kingdom, whereas the Pharisees did not enter it.

Verses 31-35

The simile spelled out by Jesus in this passage compares the rejection of both John and Jesus by that generation to the perverse and unreasonable behavior of spoiled brats sitting in the marketplace.

They would not dance when the piper piped nor mourn when the wailer wailed. They would not play wedding, for that was too happy; and they would not play funeral, for that was too sad!

The last clause, that “wisdom is justified of all her children,” shows that both John and Jesus were fulfilling the true mission God sent them to achieve.

ANOTHER ANOINTING

Note: This anointing which took place in the house of Simon the Pharisee should not be confused with that which took place in Bethany. (John 12:1-8)

Verse 36

This Pharisee was Simon (verse 43); and he may not be identified with Simon the Leper. (Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 12:1f)

The circumstances here do not fit the anointing in Bethany at all. Luke’s record of another anointing perfectly fits into the pattern he followed throughout the gospel.

This Simon was doing what might be called “slumming.” He had invited Jesus out for the purpose of studying Him; but before the evening ended, Simon found himself the one studied, analyzed and found wanting.

Verses 37-38

This is not the anointing of the devout Mary, as recorded in the other gospels. This person was a “sinner,” and her knowledge of what was going on in this Pharisee’s house speaks volumes about that Pharisee. Her free access to his house shows some affinity between them, although it did not extend so far as a common attitude toward Jesus, whom the Pharisees dishonored, and whom the woman honored.

This unfortunate daughter of Israel had fallen into a life of sin, but she recognized in Jesus a holiness and love which opened up the fountain of her tears falling inadvertently upon His feet (a fault as she viewed it) which was quickly corrected by her wiping them with her hair, and anointing them with the precious ointment. Her kisses, lavished upon His feet, were a further expression of her love for the Son of God.

Verse 39

“He said to himself . . .” This Pharisee was correct in one of the premises of his conceited syllogism, namely, that a true prophet would have known who and what manner of person the woman was. However, he was wrong in the companion premise that Jesus did not know who and what manner of person the woman was. He not only knew but also knew all about Simon, as the conversation at once revealed.

The proud, unloving Pharisee had already made up his mind. He had decided that Jesus was an imposter, and one cannot fail to sense the condescension in his icy, “Teacher, say on!” But he was in for the shock of his life. The Master began by relating what Simon probably thought was an innocuous little parable; the point he would get later on.

Verses 40-42

“The lender”—Jesus Christ our Lord.

“The one who owed five hundred shillings”—the sinful woman.

“There both being unable to pay”—the fact that no mortal can atone for even the most significant of his sins.

“His freely forgiving both”—the unmerited favor of God in providing a means of forgiveness for all.

The question of who “loved”—the most focuses upon the most important element in determining who shall be saved.

Significantly, the sins of the Pharisee, consisting of pride, conceit, and self-righteousness, were here set forth as only a tenth as weighty as the sins of the woman.

Verse 43

There was not even anything in Jesus' address to Simon that revealed the blockbuster that Jesus was about to detonate in his face.

Simon, no doubt, was still smiling a sophisticated sneer when Jesus said, "You have rightly judged." Then turning to the woman, who in Jesus's sight was the principal audience, He spoke as it were, over His shoulder to Simon.

Verse 44

Simon had slighted and insulted Jesus by withholding the basin of water and the towel normally extended to a visitor.

Whatever his reason, it must be viewed as an intentional slight, a discourtesy that this Pharisee would not have allowed toward any of his priestly friends; yet he thus snubbed the great High Priest.

What the proud Pharisee withheld the sinful woman gave. Her tears replaced the basin of water, and her hair the towel. How the heart of Simon the hypocrite must have quailed before such a denunciation.

Verses 45-46

It was thus a triple insult that Simon had directed against the Lord of life; not merely the basin and towel, but the customary greeting of a guest by a kiss, and the anointing of the head with oil.

These had been withheld. But the woman had supplied, out of love, all three.

Verses 47-48

Simon, who thought he was judging the Lord, suddenly found himself the judged. There is not a more dramatic incident in the scriptures than this.

What did Simon say to such a thing? No response was recorded. One may well suppose that both his conversation and his appetite were overcome by what had occurred.

The focus at once shifted to what the other guests were saying within themselves, indicating that the judgment of silence had fallen upon them all.

Verse 49

While the dinner guests were thus concentrating upon their inner thoughts, Jesus reiterated what He had already said.

Verse 50

Far more than forgiveness, salvation itself was thus extended to Simon's impromptu guest. What about her obedience? It was assured. "Your faith has saved you, go in peace."

Jesus said—and here was one who truly loved Him. She was not saved by "faith only."

CHAPTER 8

In this chapter, there is a unique glance at Jesus' ministry, disclosing certain women as financial backers of His ministry (verses 1-3), followed by events common to the other of the holy gospels: the parable of the sower (verses 4-15), lessons from the lamp (verses 16-18).

Spiritual kinship is more important than fleshly kinship (verses 19-21), stilling the tempest (verses 22-25), the Gerasene demoniacs (verses 26-39), the raising of Jairus' daughter and the included wonder of healing the woman with an issue of blood (verses 40-56).

CERTAIN WOMEN WHO HELPED JESUS

Verses 1-3

Only Luke gives this glimpse of the part women played in supporting the ministry of Jesus. These faithful women, from their own resources, ministered unto Christ and the Twelve.

"Mary Magdalene . . ." This means that Mary came from the town of Magdala, thought to be the same place as Magadan on the west side of the sea of Galilee, today called El-Mejael and consisting of some twenty residences; and pointed out as the traditional home of Mary Magdalene. It was built on the water's edge at the southeast extremity of the Sea of Galilee.

“There is not the least bit of evidence, either here or elsewhere else in the New Testament, that Mary Magdalene was an immoral woman.” The sevenfold demon possession and the serious physical or mental condition that accompanied such a condition do not suggest immorality.

There are seven Marys mentioned in the New Testament, but this was one of the most individually honored. She was the first person to whom Jesus appeared after the resurrection and was entrusted with the announcement that Christ would ascend into heaven.

“Joanna . . . and Susanna . . .” Nothing is known of these ladies, except what is said here. “Preaching and bringing the good tidings . . .” It is not enough merely to preach the kingdom of God; it must also be “brought” in the lives of its inherents.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Verses 4-8

The metaphor of this parable is that of a farmer sowing grain in the old-fashioned manner.

He would stride through the plowed field, scattering the seeds by handfuls taken from a bag carried over his shoulder, and spreading them in an arc before him as he walked. The hard-beaten path alongside or through the field, as well as the thorns were common features of such a field.

Such a scene as this has been witnessed by millions in all ages; but only Jesus our Lord ever viewed it in the cosmic dimensions set forth here. His explanation is as follows.

Verses 9-15

The whole gospel of Jesus Christ was so designed that stubborn hearers of it will actually be destroyed by the holy gospel itself. (2 Corinthians 2:15-16 NEB)

There can be no wonder then that Jesus cried with a loud voice and said: “Take heed what you hear!”

The dual quality of the parables, (1) enlightening them of right spirit, and (2) binding and hardening those who were evil, must therefore be understood as

pertaining to the entire gospel itself. The same sunshine melts butter and hardens putty; and the same glorious gospel saves some and destroys others; but the difference lies, not in the gospel, but is found inherently within men themselves. It is what a man is that determines, more than anything else, what he gets out of the gospel.

LESSONS FROM THE LAMP

Verse 16

A true follower of the Lord, upon lighting a lamp, that is, by becoming religiously and spiritually enlightened through obedience to the gospel, should not hide it under a bed symbolizing either laziness or licentiousness; nor under a vessel, symbolizing the cares and preoccupations of life.

Nor should it be hidden under a bushel (Matthew 5:15), symbolizing business, industry and commerce; but he should display his light upon the “stand.”

The Scriptures do not leave us in the dark as to what this stand is. It is a local congregation of the Lord’s church. (Revelation 1:20)

Verse 17

“For nothing is hidden . . .” This too has a dual application.

1. Jesus’ purpose was to reveal the whole gospel to men, not to conceal it.
2. And also, the hidden secrets of every life.

These shall be made known in judgment; but more immediately, the choices men make with reference to believing and obeying the gospel are likewise revealers of the secret hearts of men.

Verse 18

The person who has the honest and good heart and responds by faithfully hearing and obeying the saving words of Christ shall be given the riches of the kingdom, even unto eternal life; but the person who has an evil heart, even though like the Pharisees glorying in the law of God, shall have what they think they have (the word of God) taken away from them.

HIS MOTHER AND HIS BRETHREN

Verses 19-21

The great lesson uttered by Jesus on this occasion was to the effect that spiritual kinship with the Lord through hearing and obeying Him is far more desirable than any fleshly relationship.

There is no need to suppose that this visit to Jesus by His mother and brethren was due to any sinister purpose on their part. They merely came to see Jesus and for no other reason.

STILLING OF THE TEMPEST

Verses 22-25

This miracle proved the authority of Jesus over the forces of nature. “Rebuked the wind . . .” “This action on Jesus’ part showed that in at least some natural disorders Satan must be recognized as able to work in such things.

God sometimes permits Satan to exercise power over the forces of nature within certain limits.

“Where is your faith . . .?” A composite of the three gospels shows the following words were spoken by Jesus:

“Why are you afraid; O men of little faith?” (Matthew 8:26).

“Why are you afraid; have you no faith?” (Mark 4:40).

“Where is your faith?” (Luke 8:25)

“Master, Master we are perishing . . .” Each of the gospels gives a different word in reporting the address to Jesus by the apostles. Matthew, Mark and Luke have “Lord,” “Teacher” and “Master,” respectively.

But why did Jesus rebuke the apostles for lack of faith? In their fear of death they failed to demonstrate confidence that Christ was fully able to take care of them. It was impossible for that ship with the Redeemer of the world on board to founder, no matter what happened; and the Lord’s followers today need to take account of a similar truth.

It is equally impossible for the church of Christ, the body of which He Himself is the Head and Preserver; ever to be destroyed, notwithstanding all the forces of hell that continually assail it.

Let the holy church make sure that Christ the true Head is aboard; and if so, no matter what storms may rage against it, the institution and all on board are assured of safety.

THE GERASENE DEMONIAK

Verse 26

Luke has “Gerasenes,” whereas Matthew has Gadarenes.” One author referred to the whole district, of which the city of Gadara was dominant; and the other referred to Gerasa, the more particular location.

Verse 27

Luke added the detail of the man’s wearing no clothes.

In this series, several dissertations on demon possession have already been written, supporting the conclusion that:

1. Demon possession was certainly a fact in those times.
2. It could be a fact today.
3. If it’s not a fact today, it’s due to the success of Jesus in destroying the works of Satan.
4. There are too many unknowns regarding human behavior today to allow any dogmatic conclusions to the effect that such a phenomenon has perished from the earth.

Geldenhuys (Ibid., p. 256), wrote, “With the incarnation of the Word, the Son of God, the forces of the devil also, in order to oppose Him as Man and in His work of redemption, endeavored to incarnate themselves in human beings.

The evil one, as it were, wanted to become a man. It is for this reason that demon-possession was such a characteristic phenomenon of the time when Jesus was upon the earth.”

Verse 28

There is also a bit of evidence to the effect that the whole demonic world lies in a state of dreadful fear and apprehension of their ultimate fate which demons freely acknowledge will be executed upon them by the Lord Jesus Christ.

How strange it is that men seem to have no fear at all of the judgment so dreaded by demons. Men do not believe in the impending punishment of evil; but demons know about it.

Verse 29

“The demon . . .” It is not clear why the possessing demons were referred to in the plural (verse 27), but in the singular afterward, unless, as revealed a little later, there was a principal demon, the spokesman for all, and in some sense their leader. (Matthew 12:43-45)

“He would burst his fetters . . .” indicates the unnatural strength of the demon-possessed. Bonds and chains which restrained a normal man were ineffective.

Verse 30

“What is your name . . .?” The demon said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. “Legion . . .” simply has the meaning of “many.” A Roman legion in those times ranged in number from 4,000 to 6,000. Jesus did not ask the demons their names at all, but the name of the man; and the usurping demons responded, not by giving their thousand names, but by the boastful claim that they were “many.”

Verse 31

The demons recognized that when Jesus commanded they must obey, and that the abyss was the fate for which they were destined. The abyss symbolized the chaos in opposition to which the world was fashioned.

Verse 32

The servile condition of the demonic world was never more apparent than in this plea that the Son of God should permit them to enter a herd of pigs. Not even that could they do without the Lord’s permission.

Jesus readily permitted it, demonstrating that even a demon's petition God will grant, subject only to the limitation that the thing requested is in harmony with the divine will.

Verse 33

It is not necessary to suppose that the swine were illegally held, Jews not being permitted to own them; and, besides, this was Gentile territory; nor to suppose Jesus could not have healed the man without permitting the exorcised demons to enter the herd.

It must be concluded that it was Jesus' will that the swine should have been destroyed through the instrumentality of the demons. Why? By permitting those malignant demons to have their will regarding their swine, Jesus demonstrated, once and for all, what is the true purpose of Satan and all his agents. God permitted the glimpse of this same destructive purpose of the evil one in what the devil was permitted to do to Job. (Job 1:12-22)

How reprehensible it is therefore for men to quibble about this, even charging the Lord with a capital offense for destroying property, while blindly refusing to see that Christ has here given a glimpse of their true enemy, Satan. Once Satan enters a man, or any society, the decline is swift, certain, and fatal.

Overwhelming significance is the fact that it was not Christ, but the demons, who destroyed the life of the unfortunate man from whom they were exorcised by Jesus' all-powerful word.

Verse 34

The destruction of such a considerable herd of swine would have been a prime topic of conversation.

It is also understandable that people who were not inclined to seek spiritual truth would have reacted with hostility and rejection; nor may such a reaction be justified.

Verse 35

In the presence of one who could so heal such a victim of Satan, the people should have been able to overcome their displeasure at their property loss; but, they were not able.

“They became frightened . . .” All four miracle stories in this chapter of Luke, contain the idea of “fear.”

Verse 36

The eyewitnesses of the wonder described all that had taken place to the assembled villagers who had gathered to view the spectacle afforded by the erstwhile madman sitting clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus, with strong emphasis, it seems, on the death of those swine.

Oh yes, the herd of hogs; how easily are men diverted from that which is most important to that which is secondary!

Verse 37

What an incredible thing it is that those people would not have seized upon the opportunity to have brought their sick and afflicted to the Master. Such blindness and short-sightedness is amazing. The rash request that Jesus should depart, our Lord honored at once; and there is no record that He ever returned.

Verses 38-39

The Lord granted the request of the demons, but did not grant this man's prayer. This was due to the fact of our Lord's making him a witness of the truth in a district that might otherwise have been without a witness.

Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you, and what great things Jesus had done for him.”

This witness of Christ's power spread the word throughout the whole region, and later, Jesus healed a deaf-mute in one of the cities where this man proclaimed Jesus. (Mark 7:32)

ONE MIRACLE EMBEDDED IN ANOTHER

Matthew, Mark and Luke record the raising of the daughter of Jairus, along with the healing of the woman with the issue of blood.

Verses 40-42

The scene of this wonder was Capernaum, or very near it; and Jairus was one of the respected managers of the synagogue which had been given to the Jews by the centurion. (Chapter 7:5)

His prostrating himself before Jesus was atypical of his class and probably earned him the sharp disapproval of his peers; but such was the agony of his heart that he braved all the consequences of seeking Jesus upon her behalf, who was dying.

There was a time-lapse between Jarius' setting out to bring Jesus to his house and the actual arrival of the Lord. The daughter was dying when he left and dead at the moment of his request of Jesus.

"The multitude welcomed Jesus . . ." contrasts sharply with the multitude beyond Galilee who had just thrust Him, as it were, out of their borders.

"The multitudes were pressing against Him . . ." This shows the pressure of the multitudes upon Christ, making it impossible for Him to move freely and causing a delay as He moved toward the home of Jairus. In such a throng, it was possible for the woman to touch Jesus inconspicuously.

Verses 43-44

This does not mean that any magical properties attached to Jesus' clothes, nor that it was possible for the woman to have been healed without the Lord's conscious willing of it.

"And could not be healed by anyone . . ." Luke was careful here to defend, quite unconsciously, the reputation of the class of physicians to which he himself belonged.

"Immediately her hemorrhage stopped . . ." The cure of the woman was instantaneous and complete.

In keeping with such designs, Jesus willed, not only that the woman should be healed, but that also the full knowledge of it should be granted to the multitude. With infinite tenderness, however, Jesus spread the unfortunate sufferer the necessity of confessing her pitiful illness while it still continued, but reserved her confession until she could make it with the joy and vibrancy of health restored.

Verses 45-46

“Who is the one who touched Me . . .?” Did not Christ know all things? He looked round about to see her that had done this thing” (Mark 5:32); and it is certain that Jesus knew, not merely that some woman had touched Him, but which woman had done so, as well.

There was a moral purpose of the question here. Jesus would not permit this woman of such commendable faith to receive in secrecy, and by stealth, in a sense, the blessing which He willed that she should receive. Moreover, following the confession, He would extend the blessing to include salvation itself.

Verses 47-48

Her fears might have resulted from the fact that, by such a touch, she had brought ceremonial uncleanness to Jesus, with some consequence of rebuke. “Your faith has made you well . . .” may also be rendered “saved,” indicating that forgiveness of sins was also extended by the Lord to this woman who had such faith in Him.

Verse 49

Thus it is clear that Jairus’ daughter had not been dead when Jairus left the house; otherwise this message would not have been sent. The contempt of Jairus’ peers is evident in the blunt statement of his daughter’s death and the equally blunt command to leave Jesus out of his plans. They said in effect: “Look, the child is dead. Jesus can do nothing in this situation.” How wrong they were!

Jesus at once moved to confirm Jairus in a faith that must have wavered in the presence of so colossal a challenge.

Verse 50

“Only believe . . .” has no bearing whatever upon the great heresy of salvation by “faith only,” referring, in this context, to the only option left to Jairus. He could, either believe in Jesus and trust His power to raise the dead, or go about the sad business of burying his only child.

How dark was the alternative of turning away from Jesus. This man Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue, an office corresponding to “president;” and it may be assumed that wealth and social position were his.

Life had dealt him flowers and sunshine till that sad day. His precious daughter, at the dawn of womanhood, lay a corpse; and what should have been the morning of life for the house of Jairus had suddenly become its night. He found the grace to believe in Jesus.

The performance of so great a miracle under conditions where it could not be denied was the trigger that set in motion His crucifixion. Jesus was not ready for the crucifixion, which in its own time would take place, when His “hour” had come.

That hour not having come at this time, Jesus freely provided His enemies with grounds of denying that any miracle had taken place as in the next verses.

Verses 51-52

“Stop weeping for she has not died, but is asleep . . .” Jesus provided His enemies with a crutch to sustain their wicked unbelief; and which, if He had not granted it, would probably have resulted in their killing Him then and there.

The true fact of the maiden’s actual death was so undeniable that only a mind maddened by the most antagonistic and frenzied unbelief could have accepted Jesus’ words in a purely literal sense.

Verses 53-56

They laughed at Jesus, knowing that she had died. “Child, arise and tell no man and her spirit returned and she arose . . .” This fits perfectly the purpose which lay behind Jesus’ words that the maiden was not dead but asleep.

When Jesus raised Lazarus who had been in the grave four days, they responded by setting about to kill both Jesus and Lazarus; nor can there be any doubt that they would have done so in this situation, except for Jesus' words that she was "asleep," and the caution here enjoined upon the child's parents to the effect that they should not tell the wonder.

The strongest presumptive proof of this miracle lies in the identity of the child raised. Why was this miracle never denied? The answer must lie in the fact that it was impossible to deny it.

Satan, however, would exercise his option of denying it long after the event, when evil men would need some crutch for unbelief. God indeed visited men in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 9

There is a definite break in this chapter (verse 51), where Luke begins a large section of teachings and events not recorded elsewhere in the New Testament. Up to that point, he related a number of incidents reported in the other gospels.

These are: the Twelve sent forth (verses 1-6), Herod's perplexity (verses 7-9), feeding the five thousand (verses 10-17), Peter's confession (verses 18-27), the transfiguration (verses 28-36), curing the epileptic boy (verses 37-43), a prophecy of Jesus' being delivered up (verses 44-45), on "Who is the greatest" (verses 46-48), the one who followed "not us" (verses 49-50); and then follows material unique to Luke; the proposal to call down fire (verses 51-55), and the story of three prospective followers of Jesus. (verses 56-62)

SENDING FORTH THE TWELVE

Verses 1-6

Both Matthew and Mark record this preaching mission of the Twelve (Matthew 10:5ff; Mark 6:7ff); and despite the fact of Luke's narrative partially following Mark's order, it actually is unlike both the others, indicating the independence of the sacred authors.

There is more than a mere possibility that Jesus sent forth the Twelve twice, this possibility resting upon the fact that Matthew records such a mission before

the deputation of John the Baptist came to Jesus, and Luke recorded it substantially after that event.

In the very nature of the training Jesus gave the Twelve in preparation for their world-wide mission, a training that extended over a period of about four years, there could have been two, or even more occasions when the Twelve were sent out to preach.

“Neither a staff . . .” Matthew stated that Jesus said, “Get you . . . no staff” (Matthew 10:10), that is, “Do not procure or purchase one,” and Mark reported Jesus as saying, “Take nothing . . . save a staff only.”

The obvious meaning of all this taken together is, “Go as you are.”

THE PERPLEXITY OF HEROD

Verses 7-9

Herod’s guilty soul trembled at the messages reaching him with regard to the mighty teachings and deeds of Jesus, indicating the tremendous impact of Jesus’ ministry upon the total population.

So great were the deeds of Jesus that the popular mind was required to seek a comparison only in the lives of the righteous dead, among the great names of Hebrew history.

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED

Verses 10-12

Since these miracles are recorded in each of the four New Testament gospels, a somewhat briefer account will be repeated here.

“City called Bethsaida . . .” The reference to Bethsaida is to the city nearest the grassy plain where the actual wonder took place, which is somewhat southeast of the city, and several miles distant, called Bethsaida-Julius.

The audience and participants in this bounty from the Lord were Jews; and a later miracle of feeding the four thousand benefited a Gentile multitude. Thus Christ revealed Himself as the bread of life to both Jews and Gentiles.

Verses 13-17

Four sacred evangelists have provided the historical records of an astounding wonder, and one that is rich with spiritual overtones. The power and godhead of Jesus are dramatically affirmed by this event.

The multitude wants to make Jesus king with the purpose of using the Lord to supply an army of insurrection against Rome.

The wealth of detail, such as the reclining of the throng in companies of fifty, the pitifully small source of five loaves and two little fishes, the Lord's giving thanks, the hard-heartedness of the Twelve, whose sympathies were in tune with the wishes of the crowd, and the Lord's sending them on ahead, despite threatening weather. There is no way to explain all this, except on the basis that it all actually happened, exactly as recorded in the New Testament.

Five thousand men, besides the women and children, had eaten all they wished, all of the bounty coming out of that little lad's basket, passing through the hands of Jesus, and from Him to the apostles and the multitudes.

PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST

Verse 18

"He was praying alone . . ." These words indicate the secluded scene, more fully identified as the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. (Matthew 16:13)

"The multitudes . . ." stresses the widespread, near universal interest of the people in the identity of one such as Jesus. Luke alone recorded the detail that prayer was the purpose in our Lord's withdrawal to this unfrequented place.

Verse 19

The multitudes were no longer suggesting that Jesus was the Christ, due to the vicious and unrelenting campaign of the religious hierarchy against the Lord.

At the very beginning of His ministry John the Baptist had announced Jesus as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." And, at first, Jesus was widely hailed as the Messiah.

Having determined that Jesus was not the type of Messiah they wanted, the priestly leaders of the people exhausted their resources of cunning and deceit in an all-out campaign to convince the people that Jesus was not the Christ. Here is a summary of their charges.

They said Jesus was a glutton (Matthew 11:18, 19).

They said Jesus was a winebibber (Matthew 11:18-19).

They said He cast out demons by the prince of demons (Matthew 9:34).

They called Jesus Beelzebul (Matthew 10:25).

They called Jesus a sinner (John 9:24).

They said Jesus had a demon (John 7:20).

They said Jesus violated the Sabbath (Matthew 12:2).

They said Jesus was a Samaritan (John 8:48)

They referred to Jesus as a deceiver (Matthew 27:63).

They accused Jesus of friendship with publicans and sinners (Luke 15:2).

They said that no prophet could come out of Galilee (John 7:52).

They accused Jesus of leading the multitude astray (John 7:12).

They said that since Elijah had not risen from the dead, it was impossible for Jesus to be the Christ (Mark 9:11).

They said Jesus had an unclean spirit (Mark 3:30).

They said, "He is beside Himself" (Mark 3:31).

They said He transgressed the tradition of the elders (Matthew 15:2).

They said, "This man is not from God" (John 9:16).

They said that none of the rulers or Pharisees believed on Him (John 7:48).

They accused Jesus of perverting the nation (Luke 23:2).

They said Jesus forbade giving tribute to Caesar (Luke 23:2).

They said that Jesus made himself a king (Luke 23:2).

They said Jesus was an evildoer (John 18:30).

They said that Jesus claimed He would destroy the temple of God and build it in three days (Matthew 26:61).

These evil slanders were a composite of lies, insinuations, misquotations, false interpretations of Scripture, racial slurs, outright falsehoods, garbled half-truths, and arrogant snobbery.

The men who indulged in the malignant crusade against the Lord of Life were the exalted rulers of the people, led by the high priest of the chosen people. They were the learned, the wealthy, the well-favored, the intellectual aristocracy, the accepted interpreters of sacred law.

The marvel of ages is that in the face of such a hellish blast of opposition the people still clung to the conviction that Jesus was someone sacred, no living person being worthy of comparison with Him, and that He must be Elijah, Jeremiah, or John the Baptist risen from the dead!

Nor can it be any wonder that, in view of such vicious slanders, the conviction that Jesus was the Christ had been somewhat eroded in the popular mind. The evil campaign of the leaders of Israel had, in that degree, succeeded for the moment.

Verse 20

The Twelve had not been swayed by the savage denunciations of the people's priestly leaders. The apostle Peter, firmly acknowledged Jesus as the Christ of God.

Verse 21

Christ's reason for the charge of secrecy was two-fold: (1) the apostles themselves could not at that time have understood the full implications of His Messiahship, and (2) a premature announcement of it could have upset the divine timetable for Jesus' death.

Verse 22

"Must suffer many things . . ." Jesus repeatedly instructed the Twelve regarding the full details of His Passion and Resurrection.

“The third day, be raised up . . .”

The convictions expressed throughout this series is that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, April 6, A.D. 30, and that He rose on the Sunday following, fulfilling to the letter the divine promise that He would be in the “heart of the earth” three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40). This is the chronology of that fulfillment:

Buried at sunset (shortly before), on Thursday.

In the grave THURSDAY night, (one night).

In the grave FRIDAY, (the first day).

In the grave FRIDAY NIGHT, (second night).

In the grave SATURDAY, (second day).

In the grave SATURDAY night, (third night).

Rose from the dead SUNDAY morning, (the third day).

Verses 23-24

This is the plan of salvation; and appropriately, it was addressed “to all.”

“Let him deny himself . . . means that one must renounce himself, pleading nothing that a mortal may either believe or do, as a proper ground of salvation, that ground being in Christ and “in Him” only.

If men are ever saved, they must be saved “in Christ” (Romans 6:3) and “as Christ” (Galatians 2:20). This self-renunciation is the same thing for all Christians that the cross was for Jesus, namely, the submission to God’s will, not one’s own will.

Jesus made the cross central to His holy religion. Our Lord’s death was an absolute requirement and precondition of human redemption.

As long as the will of man opposes the will of the Lord, salvation for such a man remains impossible.

Verse 25

They are indeed the poor who lose themselves in the vain pursuit of the world and worldly values. One’s self may be kept and preserved only through giving

one's self unreservedly to Jesus. Whatever pride, glory, wealth, or power of the world may be enjoyed by a mortal, it is but for a moment, then comes the final reckoning, the assignment of an eternal destiny.

Verse 26

The warning in this verse is against being ashamed of Jesus and His words, there being no essential difference. One who is ashamed of Jesus' words is also ashamed of Jesus.

Behold the pride and vanity of life, that mortal man, encompassed with weakness and infirmity, born to trouble as sparks fly upward, destined to strut and fret his brief hour upon life's stage, and then to descend into the rottenness of a grave—that such a creature should be ashamed of the Lord who died to redeem him from the curse of sin!

Verse 27

This is a prophecy of the establishment of God's kingdom on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. "Some of those . . ." Why did Jesus say that "none" of them should taste of death till they saw the kingdom? This was because both He and Judas Iscariot were to die before that Pentecost came.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Verse 28

"Peter, James, and John . . ." were in a special sense, intimates of Jesus, being the only apostles permitted to view this wonder, the raising of Jairus' daughter, and the agony in Gethsemane.

"Up to the mountain to pray . . ." Luke stressed the prayer life of the Lord, withdrawing from the crowds as His seeking an opportunity for prayer and solitude.

Verse 29

"While He was praying . . ." Jesus here faced a great crisis in His life, issuing in His deliberate choice of the way of suffering for human salvation.

Verse 30

This is one of the most remarkable things in Scripture. The men mentioned here had been dead for centuries, but they appeared on this mountain and spoke with Jesus. This speaks volumes of the subject of immortality. The righteous dead had not perished; they are safe.

Those departed saints were very interested in the atoning death of Christ.

Verse 31

Only Luke gives the subject matter of the conversation between the Lord and these Old Testament worthies, and the truly significant fact of Jesus' decease being a matter of His own accomplishment is revealed.

"His departure . . ." This leaves room for the discernment that Jesus, though suffering death, did not actually cease to be. Our Lord was the architect of His own crucifixion; and, although evil men were allowed a part in it, it was only His holy will that permitted it.

"Moses and Elijah . . ." were Old Testament representatives of the Law and Prophets; and their appearance in this scene, where, in a sense, they laid their homage at the feet of Christ, is equivalent to the office of Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King who was about to succeed all the authority (and more) that pertained to God's representatives in the old covenant.

Verse 32

This is the evangelist Luke's categorical denial that it was any such thing as a dream, or vision, which the holy apostles saw.

"When they were fully awake" has the alternate reading, "having remained awake" and Luke's clear intent is to affirm their remaining awake, despite the fact of their being sleepy.

Verse 33

"Not realizing what he was saying . . ." Peter's ignorance was in supposing that his being on the mountain in company with Moses, Elijah, and Jesus was in any manner better than being on the mountain with Jesus only.

It is not Jesus and someone else, or anything else, that blesses men, it is Jesus only. This blunder on Peter's part has the utility of stamping the whole event as factual, historical, and original.

Verse 34

"A cloud . . ." It is the same as the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, the cloud that filled Solomon's temple, and the visible glory, which according to the rabbis, rested upon the ark, and was called the "Shechinah."

It was certainly no ordinary cloud, which explains the fear of the apostles.

Verse 35

The voice must be identified as that of the Father Himself who spoke to Jesus three times during His ministry in the same audible manner as here, namely at the baptism, during Jesus' prayer at the last public discourse (John 12:28), and here."

"Listen to Him . . ." All divine commandments are restrictive; and this means, therefore, "Do not hear Moses; do not hear Elijah, etc." When coming down from the mountain, they saw "Jesus only." (Matthew 17:8)

Verse 36

"When the voice had spoken . . ." may be rendered, "When the voice was past," thus associating the words "you hear Him." With the disappearance of Moses and Elijah, it has the necessary implication of "hear Jesus only."

"And reported to no man . . ." The apostles were obedient to the instructions of the Lord. (Matthew 17:9)

CURE OF THE EPILEPTIC BOY

Verses 37-40

The apostles were describing the symptoms, not the cause of the malady, the cause of it being clearly revealed as demon possession. Jesus not only rebuked the unclean spirit, which could not be understood as rebuking a disease.

Jesus said, "This kind cannot come out by anything, but prayer." (Mark 9:29) Thus, whatever the symptoms, this was a case of demon possession.

“Begged Your disciples . . . they could not . . .” The failure of the apostles, in this case, was due to some failure within themselves; for it is written that Jesus had given them authority “over all demons.” (9:1)

It appears that they had neglected prayer; and there could also have been on their part a kind of self-reliance apart from the power of God, feeling, perhaps that “in themselves,” personally resided the power to do such things. They were embarrassed by the failure.

Verse 41

Jesus was displeased with the apostle’s failure, also by the Pharisees’ campaign of allegation that Elijah had not come, an objection He had just answered for Peter, James, and John. (Matthew 17:9-13)

There was also the insinuation of the afflicted child’s father that perhaps not even Jesus could heal his son. (Mark 9:23) Satan had clearly made some headway, leading to the denunciation here by Jesus.

Verse 42

The father was doubtful and uncertain that even Jesus could help; and moreover the sacred Twelve were helpless and embarrassed; but Jesus gloriously succeeded.

Generations may rise and reject the Lord; unbelievers may wax bold and arrogant; and even the Lord’s disciples may, through their own neglect of spiritual things, find themselves powerless to cope with life’s problems. Nevertheless, Christ and His holy faith are always successful.

Verse 43a

They had seen only Jesus Christ and this does not mean the multitudes hailed Jesus as God; but what it does mean is that Luke recognized Christ as God, describing the glory they gave to Jesus, and identifying it as hailing the “greatness of God.”

PREDICTION OFF HIS PASSION

Verses 43b-45

This is another prediction of Jesus' sufferings, death, and resurrection. "It was concealed from them . . ." It was God's will that the apostles, while being so thoroughly briefed on all that would take place, should also fail to "get it," as we might say.

The concealment was not due to the design of God but to the limitations of men.

WHO WAS THE GREATEST

Verses 46-48

This dispute about who was the greatest took place somewhere between the uplands of Caesarea Philippi where Peter confessed the Lord, and Capernaum.

Little did the Twelve, at that time, understand what Jesus had been saying of the cross, as the only way of life, that they were occupied with the question of rank among themselves.

If they had already reached Capernaum, which may have been true, the incident reported could have taken place in the home of Peter and Andrew where Jesus often stayed. The child Jesus took in His arms and set beside Him was one of Peter's children.

This passage enlisted the service of the entire Christian world upon behalf of little children; and this is a most wonderful service. However, the passage goes beyond the physical care and provision for earth's children. "The child stands as a type of the humble and childlike disciple." Jesus was making the humility of little children to be the badge of greatness in the kingdom of God.

The lesson being that, just as Jesus had emptied Himself, forsaking all earthly honors, and being found among men as a servant, in the same manner the truly great follower of Christ must exhibit the example of His Lord.

This was squarely opposed to the jealous jockeying of the disciples over who would be the head man in the kingdom.

THE MAN WHO FOLLOWED NOT "US"

Verses 49-50

A thing of considerable importance that comes to light here is the fact that the apostles were not continually in the company of Jesus, indicating that there may have been a number of occasions when the Lord had sent them out "on their own."

"We tried to hinder him . . ." This was the true sectarian spirit! If he is not "with us" away with him! "He does not follow along with us . . ." This statement is like the statement Jesus later made, "He that is not with Me is against Me." (11:23)

There are situations in which either premise is true, The one in view here condemns the savage type of sectarianism which demands that every good effort must be edited and controlled "by us;" whereas the second emphasizes the truth that whosoever has not taken a stand for Jesus is, in fact, against Him. Both are fully true.

THE PROPOSAL TO CALL DOWN FIRE

Verses 51-56

Beginning with these verses and continuing through the next ten chapters of this gospel, Luke recorded a wealth of material, nearly all of which is found nowhere else. This rather extended tour of Galilee filled up "the last six or seven months of our Lord's earth life."

It evidently was a careful visitation by Jesus of many villages not included on previous tours.

"Set His face to go to Jerusalem . . ." cannot mean that Jesus traveled in a straight line to that city, but rather that certain final things were being done before He should enter the capital and suffer for the sins of mankind.

"James and John . . ." Just why the other disciples were not mentioned here is not clear. Perhaps they did not agree with the proposal to call down fire on the village.

“They did not receive Him . . .” Just why this particular Samaritan village should have behaved so differently from Sychar was due to the same Gentile conceit to which Paul addressed himself in Romans. (Chapter 10-12)

They hated Jerusalem and all it stood for and were ready to reject the Lord Himself because of His intention of going there to die for them! How blind is hatred!

“Command fire . . .” It is quite revealing that the apostles believed they had such power; and, with Jesus’ permission, of course they did. That permission, however, they did not have.

“He rebuked them . . .” (Additions have been found in some ancient manuscripts and now appear in the margins of your Bible which reads; “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”)

“They went on to another village . . .” Isn’t it wonderful that God does not retaliate against sinful men, repaying evil with evil? A village rejected the only begotten Son, but He only went on to another village.

“The Sons of Thunder,” would have punished without mercy this wretched village of the Samaritans; but Jesus rebuked the very thought of doing such a thing.

There are countless places on earth today where Christ is openly dishonored, where evil is a principal employment of the vast majority, if not all; and yet God still causes His sun to shine on the just and the unjust and flowers to bloom in the gardens of the depraved no less than in the yards of the righteous. How wonderful are the ways of God!

Finding a field difficult, or nearly impossible, the follower of Christ should try another location. If not received in one place, let him go to another.

THREE PROSPECTIVE FOLLOWERS

Verse 57

Many a soul has felt the thrilling impulse to leave everything and follow the Lord; and if following Jesus continued to have the sharp romantic focus in the

believer's heart as in the case of this man, then there would be many more followers.

Under the excitement of the moment, this man declared an unwavering faith; but, in a sense, he did not know what he was saying.

Verse 58

Our Lord has deliberately chosen the way to Jerusalem and the cross. Appropriate to that purpose was the inclusion here at the beginning of three prospective followers and the tests that failed (presumably).

This first prospect evidently thought that following Jesus would be some kind of settled occupation which would reward him with salary or endowment; but Jesus quickly pointed out that He Himself was itinerant, having been refused lodging in a Samaritan village, having literally nowhere to lay His head, and without any of the secular emoluments with which earthly leaders rewarded their followers.

No more was heard of prospect *number one*.

Verse 59

This was prospect *number two*. He would follow the Lord, but of course, not during the lifetime of his father; after his father's death, and the estate had been settled, then he would be glad to follow.

Jesus' rejoinder stated the claim of highest priority for the affairs of His kingdom.

Verse 60

Now comes prospect *number three*.

"Leave the dead to bury their own dead . . ." There can be no higher priority than one's duty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord, by such a statement as this, demanded for His own holy purposes and allegiance even greater and more binding than that given to generals and kings of the earth.

Jesus in this passage demanded such a priority for His holy kingdom, but with this monumental difference, that Jesus called men to life and eternal salvation, whereas earth's chieftains call men for shame and death.

"The dead to bury their own dead . . ." has reference to those who are spiritually dead burying their own dead.

People who plan and conduct funerals in such a manner as to coincide with regularly scheduled worship services of the church out of respect to their convenience are in violation of the priorities mentioned here.

Verses 61-62

Prospect number three's request might have seemed reasonable enough; but Jesus knew of the pressures the man would encounter at home and the persuasions that would thwart discipleship. He promptly replied with the metaphor of a man plowing a straight furrow. This is an agriculture figure.

It was the divine genius of our Lord which saw in such things as sowing, reaping, casting fish nets, making bread, carving yokes, etc., the symbolism of eternal truths.

Geldenhuys (*op. cit.*, p. 296) applied the metaphor thus: "One who plows must look forward before him so as not to plow a crooked and bad furrow."

Also, he who desires to be a member of Christ's kingdom should never allow other matters to distract his attention."

It should be noted that Jesus Himself honored the priorities which He here prescribed for others. He subordinated all earthly considerations, even the tender ties of His mother and brethren, to the all-important purpose of His mission of redemption.

CHAPTER 10

With this chapter begins the great body of material peculiar to Luke, comprising some of the most glorious teachings the Savior delivered to mankind, and making this some of the most interesting writings in the Sacred Scriptures. The sending forth of the seventy (verses 1-16), their return (verses 17-20), the

rejoicing of Jesus (verses 21-24), the account of the Good Samaritan (verses 25-37, and an incident in the home of Martha and Mary. (verses 38-42)

Verse 1

“Seventy others . . .” This word “others” derives from heterous, meaning: “others of a different kind,” thus distinguishing this group from the Twelve.

“Two by two . . .” This plan provided courage, companionship, and credibility on the part of those delivering the message, and also afforded protection for the messengers from both physical and moral dangers.

“Every city and place . . .” The time for the crucifixion of Christ was rapidly approaching, There were many places which Jesus had not been able to visit; the sending of this group provided an extension of His ministry possible in no other way.

Dummelow (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 751) writes: “He wished to train His followers to act alone after His departure.”

It is significant that Jesus was able to command such a large group of men in such a mission, indicating the power His ministry had already generated.

The number sent on this mission (whether seventy or seventy-two) had spiritual and symbolical overtones. The Jews held that the Gentiles were made up of seventy nations; and at their feast of Tabernacles, “seventy bulls were offered on behalf of the Gentile nations . . . to make atonement for them.”

The cities to which these seventy were dispatched were in Trans-Jordan where Gentile population predominated.

Verse 2

The harvest metaphor was often used by Christ. There is always a great harvest, but the laborers have always been in short supply.

Charles Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary p, 498) wrote: The laborers have always been tragically few; it is man’s fatal lack of concern for his fellowmen that keeps the numbers so small; but the Master makes it clear throughout His gospel that this concern is a test of discipleship.”

Verses 3-4

“Carry no purse . . . “The meaning here is clearly that of eliminating baggage, as if Jesus had said, “Go just as you are.”

“No shoes . . .” The verb in this clause which is applicable to “shoes” is “carry,” not “wear;” and the meaning is undeniably a prohibition of carrying “extra” shoes. If the Lord had meant for them to go barefoot, would He not have said so?

“Greet no one on the way . . .” This means that, they were not to waste their time along the road through long-winded salutations as is customary in the East.”

Verses 5-6

“Son of peace” . . . is a Hebrew idiom meaning “a person inclined to peace.” An expression of good will, will bless the receiver of it, but if rejected will return to bless the giver. As Ray Summers, (Commentary on Luke, p. 127) wrote: “No prayer for God’s peace or blessing is wasted . . . if one upon whom the blessing is pronounced rejects it, it will return to bless him who sincerely offered it.”

Verse 7

The Lord expressly forbade these representatives of Himself to shop around, as it were, for more convenient or comfortable accommodations.

Verse 8

This admonition was especially appropriate in view of the Gentile character of the area (Trans-Jordan) where the seventy were sent.

The Jews in that area were not very scrupulous in observing the restrictions imposed by their law; and, as those restrictions were shortly to disappear altogether in the approaching kingdom, there could have been nothing gained by Jesus’ messengers making any big point of their observance.

The seventy were thus instructed “to eat what they were served without causing inconvenience to their host by requiring 'kosher' food.”

Verse 9

There was no admonition to the seventy to “raise the dead,” as in the case of sending forth the Twelve. This is proof of the inferior nature of the mission upon which the seventy were sent.

“The kingdom of God has come near . . .” It had come near in two dimensions; *first*, the King Himself had appeared and was soon to visit in the communities where the seventy went.

Second, the Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, when the kingdom would come, was less than a year in the future.

Verses 10-11

No gospel mission has any valid purpose beyond that of giving men the opportunity to hear and know the truth.

In these instructions, Jesus clearly recognized the right of cities to reject the truth; but such a rejection entailed also their suffering of the penalties and consequences of their choice. The message was exactly the same to those who received and those who rejected God’s messengers: “The kingdom of God has come near.”

Note: God does not command that any specific individual or city to be “won for the Master,” but rather that the message be proclaimed in its full integrity—the rest is left up to the hearer.

“We wipe off in protest against you . . .” Adam Clarke in his (Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 119) wrote: “The Jews considered themselves defiled by the dust of a heathen country, which was represented by the prophets as polluted land (Amos 7:17) when compared with the land of Israel, which was considered as a holy land (Ezekiel 14:1), therefore, to ‘shake the dust of any city of Israel from off one’s clothes or feet’ was an emblematical action, signifying a renunciation of all further connection with them, and placing them on a level with the cities of the heathen.” (Amos 9:7)

The practice of this symbolical action was continued into the apostolic age; Paul and Barnabas, for example, “shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium,” (Acts 13:51).

If God’s Word is rejected in one place, the message should then be declared in another.

This is also true regarding individuals; and no preacher of the Word should consider it his divine mission to nag any man into the kingdom of God.

Verse 12

“In that day . . .” was a reference to the final judgment which shall terminate the dispensation of grace.

“Sodom . . .” was a grossly wicked city whose very name came to be associated with depravity; but their carnal sin in the sight of God were actually less reprehensible than the arrogant rejection of the Redeemer by the cities of Israel.

Sodom was destroyed by fire from heaven. (Genesis 19:1-26) The greater sin of the cities of Israel derived from their refusing to see the Light of all nations, an opportunity Sodom did not have.

Verses 13-14

“Chorazin . . . Bethsaida . . .” The New Testament does not record the mighty works done in these cities.

Chorazin is mentioned only one other place in the New Testament (Matthew 11:21); while Bethsaida is mentioned several times as the residence of Peter, Andrew, Phillip, etc. Only one miracle was reported there, and it was done outside the city.

The feeding of the five thousand was only a few miles from it, but still not in it.

“Tyre and Sidon . . .” These cities were considered as the most wicked of antiquity. The Jews fully believed that those cities deserved the awful judgments that fell upon them.

The point Jesus was making here was that Jewish cities rejecting their rightful King were more wicked, than proverbial Tyre and Sidon.

Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon all fell, being overwhelmed with total destruction. The physical ruin of such cities was only part of the eternal consequence of their sins; all must confront God's final judgment on the Great Day.

"They would have repented . . ." This shows that the depravity of such cities as Sodom and Tyre was due in part to a lack of opportunity; for Jesus says here that if they had seen such wonders as Jesus performed in Jewish cities, they would have repented.

This raises a question of why they did not receive greater opportunity and, coupled with the projection of a more enduring status in eternity for Tyre and Sidon than for the cities of Israel, these become elements of mystery which lies totally beyond the perimeter of human understanding.

Obviously, there shall be many surprises in the judgment.

J. W. McGarvey (Commentary on Matthew, p. 100) pointed out that "When the time came for evangelizing the Gentiles, Tyre and Sidon accepted the gospel and verified the words of this text." (Acts 21:3-6; 27:3)

"Sitting in sackcloth and ashes . . ." Clothing oneself in the coarsest of garments and sitting dejectedly in ashes was from the remotest times a symbolical expression of repentance (Job 2:8), and by Nineveh. (Jonah 3:6)

Verse 15

"Capernaum . . ." This was the home of Jairus whose daughter was raised from the dead, and of the centurion whose son and servant were healed, and of the nobleman whose son was healed of a fever; but the implication is clear that many such wonders were wrought in addition to these which found their way into the sacred gospels.

"Will not be exalted to heaven . . .?" Galilee, a strong commercial city, gateway to Palestine from the East, beneficiary of the payroll afforded by a strong military outpost of the Romans, this city might have imagined that nothing but increasing prosperity and glory would mark their future; but Jesus did not see their future in such a favorable light. As a consequence of rejecting Jesus, Capernaum and all the cities of Israel would be utterly destroyed.

“Hades . . .” Norval Geldenhuys (op.cit., p. 100) wrote that in the New Testament, “Hades does not mean the abode of the dead (the good and the wicked) but a place of punishment and condemnation.”

Ray Summers (op. cit., p.131) while conceding that “Hades” sometimes has this meaning (as in Revelation 20:14), insisted that the usual meaning is “the place of the dead. In the sense of the realm of the dead it was used for the idea of extinction.”

Verse 16

The thesis maintained in this verse is that of the identity of God with Jesus and of Jesus with His servants, a major tenet of Holy Scripture. The same relationship appears in Acts 22:8 where Paul’s persecution of the church is made the equivalent of persecuting Jesus. In this also appears the responsibility of men to receive the word of God when delivered through God’s messengers.

THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY

Verses 17-18

“Watching Satan falling from heaven as lightning . . .”

The power of Jesus’ disciples over Satan, in that they were able to cast out demons, was proof to Jesus that Satan was defeated. “Satan is a conquered enemy; and where action is taken in the name of Jesus, victory is gloriously assured.”

Satan had suffered some major defeats, notably in connection with Christ’s temptation; but Jesus was looking forward to Satan’s final fall, his complete defeat at Christ’s hands.”

Verse 19

“Tread upon serpents and scorpions . . .” This was not an inducement to snake-handling, either for the seventy or to the Christians of all ages, but rather an affirmation of God’s providence as exerted upon behalf of His servants in all generations.

The symbolical meaning of “serpents and scorpions” is primarily “the works of the devil.” The key to this verse is the last clause, “nothing shall injure you.”

While it is true that the apostles and prophets of the New Testament did actually take up poisonous serpents and were bitten without harm (Acts 28:5), there is utterly no example of where any person ever did such things on purpose and presumptuously.

Verse 20

“Do not rejoice . . .” That is, do not rejoice in these victories as your own personal triumph; although through you, they are nevertheless victories of the Lord.

“Names recorded in heaven . . .” The names of God’s servants are inscribed in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”

THE REJOICING OF CHRIST

Verse 21

This rejoicing of Jesus was “in the Holy spirit,” indicating that even His emotions were in harmony with that Spirit which, without measure, dwelt in Him. The true joy of the redeemed issues automatically, in the prayers of thanksgiving, to the Father.

“Hide these things . . .” God did not hide His revelation from the wise and understanding of earth for they received exactly the same revelation as the “babes,” with this difference—“The revelation to those with the wrong attitude, when they persistently rejected it, was taken away from them, and they were permanently confirmed in their spiritual blindness.”

Verse 22

This verse is of incredible importance in showing that the Christology of the gospel of John is fully equaled by that of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

As should have been expected, the radical scholars who deny both the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures have greeted this verse with screams of outrage, many of them having had to resort to the last refuge of unbelief, that of making this verse, an interpolation.

It is only because there are persons who refuse to recognize the divinity of Jesus, or at any rate to believe that He proclaimed it so explicitly, that they try to get rid of this verse.

Verses 23-24

No king or prophet in Israel's great past had been so blessed as these humble men. Though picked from the lower ranks of society, they went out to proclaim the establishing of the kingdom of Christ—the good news of salvation. Charles L. Childers (op, cit., p. 501)

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Verse 25

We may not ascribe to this lawyer a malicious intention as he received Christ's encouraging words, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mark 12:34)

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life . . .?" It is erroneous to deny that Jesus answered this question; because the ensuing conversation shows that, when requested to answer his own question, the lawyer accurately did so, Jesus' receiving his answer as true, thus confirming it.

Verse 26

"How does it read to you . . .?" A number of important deductions are mandatory from this response to Jesus.

1. There is the premise that one may find in the sacred scriptures the true answer to the question of what must be done to inherit eternal life.
2. There is the deduction that every man is responsible for reading the answer himself.
3. There is the implication that the sacred scriptures give the same answer to all who faithfully read them.

This verse has the impact of saying, "Look, Lawyer; God has told men what to do to be saved; it is written in the Scriptures, and you, like every other man, may surely read it." "What does the Bible say?" This is still the only way to receive the correct answer to so important a question.

Verses 27-28

On another occasion, a different lawyer was given this very reply by Jesus to the effect that loving God and loving one's neighbor fulfilled all the law and the prophets, saying, "On these two commandments depends the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:40)

Salvation has never been possible except on the basis of doing God's will—all of it; but of course, this has always been impossible for every man who would be saved must be saved by Christ, in Christ, and completely identified with Him.

Such a thing being achieved only by membership in Christ's spiritual body of which He is the head.

Membership in that body is free to all mankind upon their fulfilling the preconditions of faith, repentance, and baptism into the one body, (1 Corinthians 12:13;) but the grounds upon which God accounts man as righteous must be identified as the perfect faith and obedience of the Son of God.

In His conversation with the rich young ruler, Jesus reiterated the principal in view here, namely, that eternal life depends upon keeping the commandments of God. (Matthew 19:17; Luke 18:20)

This fact sends every man to Christ for salvation; only He kept God's commandments perfectly. Every soul seeking salvation must:

1. Keep perfectly the sum total of God's commandments.
2. Or accept identity with Christ, absolutely, who did observe all of the Father's commandments. Only Christ can save; for only He fully obeyed.

Verse 29

It was in answer to this question of, "Who is my neighbor?" that Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan, and not in answer to the question of how to inherit eternal life.

The lawyer's conscience condemned himself in the knowledge that he had not loved God fully nor his neighbor as himself.

The parable of the Good Samaritan was given for the purpose of demonstrating to this lawyer that he did not have a clear conscience and that under no circumstance was he an heir of eternal life, having failed (as men fail) to live perfectly in keeping God's commandments.

Verses 30-35

The method of interpreting this parable which is usually followed in these times is that of contrasting religious people (the priest and the Levite) with the non-religious humanitarian superior to the uncharitable religious persons: then construing the whole as an answer to the question of how to inherit eternal life, with the conclusion that the only thing needful in order to inherit eternal life is for one to do good to his fellowmen.

This parable teaches no such thing. While it is true, of course that uncharitable and pitiless religious persons cannot be saved, it is likewise true that the unreligious humanitarian is also without hope.

"A certain Samaritan" in this parable does not stand for non-religious humanitarians at all, but for the Christ of Glory who has shown infinite compassion and pity upon all.

Jesus our Lord is the true model of all human behavior, and not the unnamed Samaritan who lavished pity and care upon the victim of robbers on the Jericho road.

One of the favorite slanders of Jesus by the Pharisees called Him a "Samaritan." (John 8:48) But in this parable Jesus touched that slander with the genius of His divinity and changed it into the most glorious accolade of eternal praise.

Verses 36-37

"One who showed mercy . . ." The lawyer did not use the hated word "Samaritan," thus affording a glimpse of his inner thoughts toward others.

"Go and do the same . . ." By such a command, Jesus enjoined upon all who would be His followers that they should go and be a neighbor to all men.

In this, there is a sharp divergence from the question of the lawyer, who seemed to be asking who was a neighbor to himself; whereas, Jesus focused on the converse of it, “What kind of neighbor are you?”

INCIDENT IN THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA

Verse 38

“A certain village . . .” This is undoubtedly Bethany; and Martha and her sister named in the next verse are undoubtedly the sisters of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. (John 11)

Verse 39

“Sister called Mary . . .” This verse in Luke is the only mention of the family of Lazarus.

“Seated at His feet . . .” This has a dual meaning namely, that Mary sat beneath Jesus on a lower seat: “but it also has a figurative meaning of listening as a disciple would listen to a teacher.” There is thus implied here a teacher-pupil relationship.

It is said that Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3)

Verse 40

Martha’s attitude toward her sister in this verse suggests that Mary was a resident in Martha’s house; for, had she been merely a guest on that occasion, it is not likely that Martha should have objected so vigorously to Mary’s failure to help with the serving.

It is not true that Martha was an unspiritual person, for one of the noblest confessions of faith in the New Testament was made by her. (John 11:27) In the incident here, she was indignant at what appeared in her eyes as a slight of duty on Mary’s part; and she called for the Lord to rebuke it.

Nor do the Lord’s words deny that a duty had been neglected; but, rather, they stress that a higher duty had been honored by Mary.

Verses 41-42

“Only a few things are necessary . . .” This can be nothing except hearing the word of the Lord; that is what Mary was doing, and it was the thing which Jesus refused to interrupt on behalf of some lesser human obligation.

The application is timeless: whatever the duties of men, whether real or imagined, whether less or greater, the one great obligation of all who were ever born is that they shall heed the word of the Son of God.

Much of the modern failure of modern Christianity lies in the fact Christians are busy with all kinds of things, many of them important and necessary, of course, but yet they have no time for the word of the Lord.

CHAPTER 11

This chapter gives Jesus’ instructions on prayer (verses 1-13), recounts His refutation of the Pharisee’s insinuation that Christ was in league with Satan (verses 14-26), records His reaction to a compliment (verses 27-28), details another instance of His reference to Jonah (verses 29-32), stresses His warning against spiritual blindness (verses 33-36), tells of His lunch with a Pharisee (verses 37-41), enumerates three “woes” against the Pharisees (verses 42-44), includes an additional three “woes” against the lawyers (verses 45-52) and concludes with Luke’s summary of the intensified evil scheme against Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees (verses 53-54).

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Verse 1

“He was praying . . .” Prayer was a characteristic habit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The person who does not pray does not have any kinship whatsoever with the Savior.

Matthew Henry (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p.692) said, “That man is a brute, a monster, who never prays, never gives glory to his Maker, nor owns his dependence upon Him.”

“After He had finished one of His disciples said . . .” Note: The Lord’s prayer is different here from the Lord’s prayer in Matthew. Jesus repeated it on several

occasions for the instruction of His followers. “Jesus’ view of prayer was that it should not be mechanical.” The respect of that unnamed disciple who made the request for instruction should be noted; he waited till Jesus had finished praying.

“Lord, teach us to pray . . .” It is a hard thing to pray well.

“As John taught his disciples . . .” No other record of such action on John’s part has come down from that age.

Verses 2-4

“And when you pray say . . .” Matthew Henry (op. cit., p.692) wrote: “Christ did not design that we should be tied up to these very words, for then there would have been no variation.”

“Father . . .” Here, Jesus uses a child’s word for Father, which appears in Romans 8:15. It is used by modern Hebrews within the family circle, and implies familiarity based on love. (Everett F. Harrison, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 230)

“Hallowed be Thy name . . .” The first concern in every prayer should be the honor and glory of God. The Christian is also instructed to hold the name of God in highest reverence and awe.

“Thy kingdom come . . .” In verse 20 of this chapter, Jesus said, “The kingdom of God has come upon you;” and from this verse we can see a double meaning in “come.”

There was a sense in which the kingdom had already come upon the people of that day; and yet this petition has respect to something future.

Anthony Lee Ash (The Gospel According to Luke, Volume II, p. 23), wrote: “There is a sense in which the kingdom is to come in any age, since not all have owned the sovereignty of God. Even after the kingdom came at Pentecost, the prayer remained a valid one for Christians. If it were not, Luke would not have preserved it in a gospel written for post-Pentecost disciples. And if it were a valid prayer for them, it remains so for Christians of any age.”

The Greek word translated “kingdom” in this prayer is rendered “*kingly power*” or “*royal sovereignty*” by practically all recognized expositors of recent times.

“Our daily bread . . .” This indicates that basic necessities alone are proper objects of petition from the Father.

“Forgive us our sins . . .” Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 323) wrote: “For” indicates here, not the ground upon which God grants forgiveness, but the condition with which we ourselves must comply if we are to enjoy forgiveness from God.

John Wesley (One Volume Commentary), confessed the same thing: “This does not note the meritorious cause of our pardon; but the removal of that hindrance which would otherwise render it impossible.”

Baptism is not the grounds for pardon, but it is an absolutely essential and necessary prerequisite to the pardon of alien sinners. Just as forgiveness is impossible for the unforgiving, salvation is impossible for those refusing to submit to a commandment which Christ Himself made a precondition of it.

“And lead us not into temptation . . .” This does not imply that God tempts any man, because “God tempts no man.” (James 1:13)

This is a plea that the Christian may not encounter temptation that will cause him to fall. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

LESSONS FROM THIS PRAYER

1. Prayers should be short.
2. They should be concerned first with the honor and glory of God.
3. Human needs are basically three: (a) bread, (b) forgiveness and (c) deliverance from temptation.
4. As indicated by the word “Father,” this is a prayer to be prayed by members of God’s family.
5. Long, bombastic prayers and vain repetitions are sinful.
6. This teaches that even Christians are presumed to be, in a sense, sinful, that is not totally free of wrongdoing.
7. The very highest priority belongs to God’s kingdom.

8. Temptation should be as much dreaded and as carefully avoided as sin itself.
9. If Christians hope to be forgiven, they must also forgive.

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT

Jesus gave extensive encouragements to His followers to pray, promising, in the most positive language, the certainty of their prayers being heard and answered. *First*, there is the example (a parable) of the friend at midnight, and then the analogy and contrast between earthly fathers and the heavenly Father, and then the dogmatic promise that the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Thus, there is a progression in the words, friend, father, and heavenly Father, a leading from the lesser to the greater in each case.

Verse 5

“A friend . . . at midnight . . .” How utterly hopeless would be the state of mortal man, if in the darkness of human wretchedness and sin there was no friend to whom one might go for help and relief.

How glorious is the Christian teaching that in the blackness of whatever midnight may engulf him, there is a Friend who will rise up and bless him.

Let it be particularly noted that the supplicant did not set out to seek a friend; he already had one! Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p.324) writes, “The answer to prayer is therefore, only certain in cases where one who prays, stands in a relation of friendship toward God, and loves and serves Him.

Verses 6-8

“My children and I are in bed . . .” The Greek word for bed applied to any room or place used for sleeping, as well as to a bed or couch.

The mention of such details as the shut door, the midnight hour, and the sleeping children was to emphasize the reluctance of the friend to respond to the borrower.

“Because of his persistence . . .” This is the center of the message of the parable. It is not his opportunity only; it is his shamelessness; for we are to suppose there

were many requests, each being more urgent than the last; although only that one is recorded which at last extorts the gift.

But why did God honor such persistence, and by this parable command us to emulate it? The answer appears in a comment made by Matthew Henry (op. cit., p. 694): We prevail with men by importunity (persistence) because they are displeased with it, but with God because He is pleased with it!"

The teaching here relieves every man of any thought that God can be troubled by the number and urgency of His petitions. *LET MEN PRAY ALWAYS!*

Verses 9-10

Men should not cease to pray, but continue praying with ever greater and greater urgency.

There is an ascending urgency in the successive imperatives, ask, seek, and knock; because to seek is more than to ask, and to knock is more than to seek.

It was for the purpose of underlining the precious promises in these teachings that Jesus had just given the parable of the friend at midnight; but He did not stop with that. He next appealed to the readiness of an earthly father to grant a son's request; and in that illustration, as in the friend at midnight, the analogy is one of contrast rather than likeness.

Verses 11-12

The teaching here is that carnal man will honor the request of his children and that it must be received that God whose loving righteousness is infinitely beyond any loving kindness of a mere earthly father will, in a far greater degree, respond to the just petitions of His spiritual children.

The things contrasted here: loaf and stone, fish and serpent, egg and scorpion, are superficially alike. Stones, serpents, and scorpions could by no means be acceptable as appropriate gifts in place of food; and the teaching is that God will not reward the petitions of His children with useless or dangerous things, but will supply what they truly need and desire. "The scorpion is a small, poisonous crab-like animal, which when at rest, is round like an egg." (J. R. Dummelow, Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 752)

The teaching is that God will not reward the petitions of His children with useless or dangerous things, but will supply what they truly need and desire.

Verse 13

Here the contrast between evil men and the righteous Father is stressed; there is also a contrast between the “good gifts” of earthly fathers (such as food) which are surpassed by the greatest of gifts, that of the Holy Spirit, the gift which includes all others.

In Matthew 7:11, the Savior represented the Father as giving “good gifts,” as distinguished from “the Holy Spirit” here. This emphasizes the difference in the two occasions.

“This discourse in Luke comes later in Jesus’ ministry and nearer to Pentecost than does the Sermon on the Mount, in which the passage cited in Matthew occurs. Therefore, Jesus can be more specific with reference to the needs of His disciples.” (Charles L. Childers, *op. cit.*, *en loco.*)

God’s children should not hesitate to pray to the Father for the measure of the Holy Spirit which has been promised to baptized believers (Acts 2:38), and which is called “an earnest” of our inheritance. (Ephesians 1:13)

THE CRAVING FOR SIGNS REBUKED

Verse 14

“Casting out a demon and it was dumb . . .” That is, the demon made the man dumb. This was another in the countless miracles of healing wrought by the Son of God.

The marvel of the multitudes suggested that perhaps the “sons of the Pharisees” had tried in vain to exorcise the evil spirit which was so easily cast out by the Savior.

Verse 15

How natural it was that the Pharisees would have renewed a charge ascribing Jesus’ power to Satan. How logical that Jesus would have replied to it with strikingly similar words and illustrations.

“Beelzebub . . .” This name is the same as Baalzebul, being derived through a mocking Hebrew corruption of the name of the old Canaanite god, Baalzebul, meaning “lord of the high place;” the Hebrew alteration of it , Baalzebub, meant “lord of flies” or of “the dunghill.”

Baal was actually not one god, but many, more accurately referred to as the Baalim.

When the Israelites entered Canaan, they found that “every piece of land had its own deity; thus, there were many Baals.” This was “the name of innumerable local gods controlling fertility of the soil and domestic animals.”

The name Beelzebub as used by Luke however, means “Satan.” The Hebrews had developed this insulting name of the old Canaanite god into a common synonym for the devil; and their application of this shameful word in connection with the Holy Christ was as vulgar and evil as anything the Pharisees ever did.

Verse 16

“A sign from heaven . . .” This was repeatedly demanded by the Pharisees, although they were not named here: and what they probably meant was some spectacular wonder, without moral value, which would cater to human curiosity.

Not only were the Pharisees incapable of judging such signs, if they had been given; but they were already sworn enemies of the Lord, intent on killing Him; and they would surely have rejected anything that even the Son of God might have done.

Satan caused fire from heaven to fall on the animals that belonged to Job. Jesus would indeed give them a sign; but it would be of His choosing, not theirs.

Verse 17

“Any kingdom divided . . .” The argument here is that Jesus’ action was not by the devil, but against Him and that if Satan was working through Jesus he was working against himself.

Verse 18

This verse strikingly reveals some things about Satan.

H. D. M. Spence (Pulpit Commentary, Volume 16, Luke, p. 303), said:

Throughout this argument, Jesus assumes the existence of a kingdom of evil.

This kingdom is armed and thoroughly organized to carry out its dread purposes. He concedes, too, in language which admits of no questioning the existence of a chief of this evil confederacy.

H. Leo Boles (op. cit., p. 235) also said, "It will be noted that Satan here is represented as a real person, not a mere principle of evil."

Now it happened that some of the Pharisees themselves professed to cast out demons, an action which they advocated as holy, helpful, and righteous; and Jesus quickly moved to point out that, judged by their own approval of exorcisms, they had already admitted such deeds as He had performed before their very eyes to be of God.

Verse 19

There was no logical way for the Pharisees to view exorcism by their own followers as being of God.

Also at the same time they could not allege that the exorcisms by Jesus were by the power of Satan.

Furthermore, there were vast differences in the claimed exorcisms by the sons of the Pharisees and the real miracles wrought by Jesus. The example before them which had caused such marveling by the people was evidently wrought upon a celebrated case wherein the sons of the Pharisees had failed to produce a cure. There is no admission here by Jesus that the pretended exorcisms of the Pharisees disciples were in fact genuine.

On the other hand, Christ was merely showing that those bigots were condemning Him and charging Him with being in league with Satan for doing exactly what their own followers professed to do.

Verse 20

"The finger of God . . ." Moses performed great wonders before Pharaoh.

After a period of time, the magicians duplicated these wonders, then came the plague of lice. Aaron stretched the rod upon the land, and the dust of the earth

became lice in man and beast.” (Exodus 8:17) Attempting to do this, the magicians failed; and they went and told Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” (Exodus 8:19)

“Then the kingdom of God has come upon you . . .” This is not a declaration that Christ’s church, or kingdom, had at this time been established, an event that took place on Pentecost. The kingdom had come in the sense that the King had appeared and was gathering out of secular Israel, the spiritual remnant, the true Israel, who, along with Gentiles, would form the nucleus of the new institution.

Verses 21-22

This little jewel of a parable is most instructive, nor should we hesitate to draw the several analogies which are most certainly in it.

The following analogies are by J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 753).

The strong man fully armed is Satan.

His court is the whole world under his usurped dominion.

His goods are the souls whom Satan holds captive.

The Stronger Man is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The spoils are the souls rescued from Satan by the Lord.

Overcoming the strong man is the frustration of all Satan’s devices through the gospel of Christ.

There can be no neutrality in such a conflict as that which appears in these verses; and Christ at once stated that key truth in the next verse.

Verse 23

“He who is not with Me, is against Me . . . He who does not gather with Me, scatters . . .”

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 330), said: “Within one generation from their final rejection of Jesus, the Jews of Palestine were overwhelmed by Rome and ever after since then, until our own times, the Jews have continued to be scattered over the world, and have constantly been the prey of the powers of darkness.”

And Jesus' words are still true, both of men and of nations. What a pity it is that America does not seem to be listening.

Verses 24-26

“When the unclean spirit goes out of a man . . .” William Barclay (The Gospel of Luke, p. 151), titled this section, “*The Peril of the Empty Soul*,” stressing (1) that a man's soul may not be left empty, (2) that a genuine religion cannot be erected on negatives, and (3) that the best way to avoid evil is to do good.”

Jesus had already spoken this parable, much earlier in His ministry (Matthew 12:43ff), making it a prophetic warning of Israel against rejecting her King; and here it is spoken again, near the close of Jesus' ministry, and at a time when the final rejection of Himself by the secular Israel was rapidly approaching.

The man in whom the evil spirit was is Israel.

The going out of the demon is the rebirth of the nation under the preaching of John the Baptist.

The swept and garnished period is the emptiness of Israel's inadequate regeneration. No meaningful change in the people occurred.

The restlessness of the demon is the relentless and disturbed hostility against Jesus of the evil powers.

His repossession of the victim is total repossession of national Israel by Satan's evil forces. This refers to the judicial hardening of Israel.

The “state worse than the first” is the hardened secular Israel, as fully expounded in Romans chapters 9-11.

In Matthew and Mark, Christ warned the Pharisees of the unpardonable sin. Here, Christ warned them of the judicial hardening that would accompany their rejection of the Lord. In the earlier episode, the wandering demon was used as a prophetic warning; here it was repeated as an explanation of what had already occurred.

Verses 27-28

In Matthew 12:46f and Mark 3:31f, it was the mother of Jesus and His brethren who interrupted; here it is a woman who spoke of Mary.

Jesus went on to stress spiritual kinship as far more important than earthly relationship to Jesus.

THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAH

Verses 29-32

“The sign of Jonah . . .” is nothing less than the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as typified by the miraculous entombment and delivery after three days of Jonah in the belly of the great fish, this truth having been spelled out in detail by Matthew 12:40.

The death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ was the great sign which Jesus promised that generation; and it should be noted that the sign was yet to be given, a future occurrence, whereas the preaching of Jesus had already been going on for years.

The burden of this entire paragraph is that Israel had failed to respond to the preaching of the Master, despite the historical examples of Gentiles who had responded to God’s message, under far less privileged circumstances.

Verses 33-36

“Light (not) under the bushel, but on the stand . . .” This refers to Jesus’ intention of giving such a sign as should draw all men to Himself. His death, burial, and resurrection, to be accomplished at the very center of Israel, would be a sign unto all generations and peoples of the earth. It would indeed be a light upon the stand.

“The lamp of the body . . . the eye . . .” Here Jesus addressed Himself to correcting His hearers’ inability (through their sins) to appreciate truth and to read God’s sign, when they should finally see it. It was not at all the nature of the sign that needed correction but the quality of perception in His sinful audience, the evil generation which confronted Him.

All great teachers of all ages have used certain key expressions over and over under different circumstances, making different deductions from them and adapting them to whatever teaching was in hand; and it is unscientific and illogical to deny that Jesus did the same thing.

Verse 37

Our Lord frequently dined with the Pharisees. This was apparently the second meal of the day; and Jesus accepted an invitation to dine, and entered the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.

It would have compromised Jesus' teaching concerning all those ceremonial washings, if He had submitted to them, out of courtesy, in this instance.

Jesus dined with Pharisees no less than seven times; and coupled with this significant fact is the declaration by Luke in Acts 6:7 that a "great company of the priests believed!"

Now the great majority of the priests were Pharisees; and in the conversion of so many of this class shortly after Pentecost, it is quite logical to suppose that among those converted were (a) either host Pharisees with whom Jesus dined, or (b) guest Pharisees who, along with Jesus were entertained.

Verse 38

The "bathing" in view here had absolutely nothing to do with bodily pollution or hygiene, being nothing except the ceremonial washings, so punctiliously observed by the Pharisees of that day.

Of significance is the fact that the Pharisee evidently expected Jesus to observe the traditional washings; and from this it appears that the invitation was tendered in the hope of entrapping Jesus, but as a bona fide act of hospitality. Otherwise, the Pharisee would not have marveled at what happened.

Verse 39

Jesus' words spoken in this verse appear blunt and harsh. Jesus made a direct move to convert this Pharisee and knowing fully the immorality and sin that marked his life, Jesus gave it to him plainly.

This verse has this meaning: “In spite of your extreme care for the vessels of your table, your whole moral life is unclean and defiled.”

Verse 40

“You foolish ones . . .” This has the weight of: “Do you really think that God cares about external cleanness only, and not about internal cleanness?”

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 307, paraphrased this verse: “Are you not fools to lay down such strict rules to avoid outward defilement, while within, in the soul, you allow all manner of wickedness? Surely God who created the things we see and touch, created the soul also!”

The persons addressed by Jesus as “fools” include an impressive list of the “respectable.” This Pharisee was doubtless hailed by his peers as wise; the arrogant fool of Psalm 14:1 was probably considered unconventional and daring.

The man who built on the sand (Matthew 7:26) was probably a respected contractor; the rich farmer who mistook his body for his soul (Luke 12:20) probably had a high social status; and the foolish virgins of the parable (Matthew 25:1f) were without doubt the cream of their society.

This gives a glimpse of what Jesus meant by the terms “fools” or “foolish”—any person who does not respect his soul’s deep need of salvation is foolish.

Verse 41

Again we have a good paraphrase from H. D. M. Spence: “I will tell you how really to purify, in the eyes of God, these cups and dishes of yours. Share their contents with you poorer neighbors.”

Bishop Basil Jones in “The Speakers Commentary” has this: “Let the Pharisees do one single, loving, unselfish act, not for the sake of the action, nor for any merit inherent in it, but out of pure good will toward others, and their whole inward condition would be different.”

THREE "WOES" AGAINST THE PHARISEES

Verses 42-44

The trouble with the Pharisees seems to have been one of a kind. They were specialists in trifles and externals.

Their whole concept of religion had degenerated into a gross, unspiritual preoccupation with outward forms and ceremonies, while neglecting utterly the great moral verities of true religion. Their tithing of garden herbs, even to the extent of counting tiny seeds and weighting mint leaves, and their multiplying man-made Sabbath rules past the boundaries of all reason—all such things had destroyed the spiritual life of the nation.

Regarding their silly Sabbath rules William Barkley (op. cit., p.131), has one of the most notable examples.

“One of the forbidden works on the Sabbath was the tying of knots, such as sailors’ and camel-drivers’ knots, and knots in ropes; but a woman might tie a knot in her girdle. Therefore, if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well, a rope could not be knotted to it; but a woman’s girdle could, and it could be raised by that!”

“The things you should have done . . .” applies to justice and love of God; and “not to leave the other undone” applies to tithing, an act for which Jesus commended them. It was their stress of that to the neglect of more important duties which was wrong.

“You love the front seats . . .” These were “seats at the front of the synagogue, around the pulpit, or lectern, and faced the congregation.”

What men love determines their destiny; and, as it was brought out so forcefully in the gospel of John 12:43, it was the love of the Pharisees for the glory which they received of themselves which blinded their eyes to the Christ of Glory.

The desire for preeminence among men, the coveting of honors bestowed by men, the popularity awarded by men—such things still snare and entrap the unwary soul; and the damage can be no less appalling than that which ruined the Pharisees; and yet how reluctantly men forego such things.

“Concealed tombs . . . unaware of . . . “ In Numbers 19:16, the rule appears which makes every person who touches a grave unclean for a week, that is, ceremonially unclean. Jesus here compared the Pharisees to an unmarked grave which could cause a man to become unclean inadvertently.

The people who were following the Pharisees, who supposedly were righteous, could be spiritually contaminated through contact with those evil enemies of Jesus.

The lawyers were close associates with the Pharisees; and when they saw the drift of Jesus’ teachings, it suddenly appeared to them that they, the lawyers, were being condemned, no less than the Pharisees.

Pricked in conscience at last, a lawyer responded.

THREE "WOES" TO THE LAWYERS

Verse 45

“The lawyers . . .” were the ones to whom the Hebrew people looked for interpretation of the Scriptures and guidance in religious questions.

“You insult us too . . .” Jesus’ strong rebuke of the Pharisees, just delivered, had not specifically mentioned the lawyers; but many of the lawyers were also Pharisees.

The one who spoke up here felt that his class also had been insulted. Jesus’ words struck home. “The hit dog hollers; so the lawyer complained.” The Lord promptly pronounced three “woes” against the lawyers.

Verse 46

This is Woe One. While multiplying men’s religious obligations to infinity by ridiculous and hair-splitting interpretations, the lawyers did not personally accept and fulfill the obligations which they imposed on others.

They avoided the regulations they prescribed for others by all kinds of “theories and handy methods of escaping the fulfillment of the commandments while keeping up the appearance of executing them.” Theirs was a demonstration of the truth that preaching what others should do is a far different thing from the preachers doing what they preach.

Verses 47-48

This is Woe Two. The hypocritical conduct of the lawyers in building impressive tombs to the honor of God's prophets whose words they themselves despised and were in the process of violating (through their opposition to Jesus) was one and the same quality of action as that of killing the prophets.

The character of those tomb-builders made the tombs they built monuments to the killing, and not to the prophets!

It was in that light that Jesus looked upon those tombs, viewing them as evidence that the evil generation before Him was of the same perverse and rebellious nature as that of their ancestors.

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 150) observed that, "The lawyers kept the view alive (that God's prophets should be killed) by building the memorial reminders."

Phillips' translation catches the spirit of the Lord's word in this place: "You show clearly enough how you approve your father's actions. They did the actual killings and you put up a memorial to it."

Verse 49

Jesus promised and sent out apostles. "The words are an utterance of Christ Himself (Matthew 23:34); Christ's knowledge of the divine counsels is so complete that His utterances are also utterances of the wisdom of God." (J. R. Dummelow, op. cit., p. 753).

Jesus our Lord is indeed the Wisdom of God. Jesus saw in the evil character of His hearers the certainty of their hatred and murder of the holy apostles.

Verses 50-51

"Charged against this generation . . ." The prophecy is here extended by Jesus to reveal the fate of the chosen people.

The long ages of their rebellious conduct against God would at last be resolved in the final hardening and overthrow of their nation, coupled with the scattering of the Jews all over the earth, the primary fulfillment of which occurred less than a generation afterward in the Jewish-Roman war which destroyed the Holy City in 70 A.D.

The appearance of Christ provided the last opportunity for Israel. Their long sustained habit of breaking God's laws and murdering His messengers had been endured on the part of God, for the reason that the preservation of Israel was necessary until the promised Seed should be delivered; but now that the Son of David had indeed appeared on earth, the summary punishment which the nation had so long merited would be suspended no longer.

The ancient policy of Israel in rejecting God and raising up a king of their own choice finally reached the climax in that generation.

Added to that disaster was the inveterate wickedness of that generation. They rejected their Messiah, bringing a deserved judgment of punishment upon them.

Had they received Christ, the blood shed by their ancestors would not have been required of them; but through their continuation in the evil ways of their ancestors, they brought the accumulated wrath of centuries upon themselves.

"Zachariah . . ." Many modern commentators identify this person with "Zechariah, the son, of Jehoida" (2 Chronicles 24:20-21); and as 2 Chronicles was the last book in the Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament Scriptures, it is supposed that Jesus referred to Abel, the first victim of murder recorded in Genesis, and coupled it with this example from the last book of the Hebrew Old Testament thus making these first and last murders an idiomatic summary of all the murders perpetrated by God's enemies.

It had been a secret murder, of course, not in the court, but between the "altar and the sanctuary;" and by these words Jesus revealed that He knew all about the secret lives of His diabolical enemies.

Thus Christ included all the righteous blood ever shed on earth, from the times of Abel until the very hour, as entering into the weight of that judgment that fell upon that generation, and not merely the far shorter list of murders recorded between Genesis and 2 Chronicles.

By understanding "blood of all the prophets shed" as a reference to the men in His presence and a murder they had committed, the appearance of error in Matthew's gospel is avoided; but of course there are those who would much

prefer to see an error in Matthew, and yet there can be no intelligent denial of the possible meaning ascribed to the clause, “the blood of all the prophets shed.”

Verse 52

This is Woe Three, “The key of knowledge . . .” This key was taken away by the false interpretations of the lawyers, which was “the true knowledge of the Messiah, the key of both the present and the future kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of grace and of glory.

It should not fail to be noted that Satan still has his multitudes of “interpreters who are neither entering the kingdom nor permitting others to enter.”

Verses 53-54

“When He left there . . .” These words indicate that Jesus abruptly rose and left the house of His Pharisee entertainers.”

“Hostile . . .” suggests that the murderous enemies of Jesus were aroused to a frenzy of violent talk against Him; they were like a swarm of angry hornets.

These guides of Jewish public opinion had been denounced by Jesus in the most emphatic language in the presence of the multitudes, and their vicious hatred against him overflowed.

“To catch Him . . .” They engaged Jesus in conversation, plying Him with questions, with only one thing in view: that of extorting, by any means, some word with which they might use as a pretext to the murder of Jesus which they had already decided to accomplish.

Herschel H. Hobbs (op. cit., p. 198), said, “Their kind lives on in those who listen to a preacher for no reason but to criticize him, and who study the Bible only to argue about it and against it.”

The enemies of Jesus were completely frustrated and confounded by the Master’s wisdom. They were cunning enough to see that they had been defeated.

As is ever the case, when they had no logical reply, they had recourse to the murder of the One who spoke the truth. After this, all their energies would be directed to the murder of the Son of God.

CHAPTER 12

Chapter 12 is a well-organized sermon spoken by Jesus shortly after He walked out of the Pharisee's house. There are in this remarkable sermon a series of nine warnings.

Warning against the leaven of the Pharisees, (Verses 1-7).

Warning against the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, (Verses 8-12).

Warning against covetousness, (Verses 13-21).

Warning against anxieties, (Verses 22-34).

Warning against failure to "watch," (Verses 35-40).

Warning against unfaithfulness, (Verses 41-48).

Warning against divisions due to God's Word, (Verses 49-53).

Warning against ignoring the signs of the time, (Verses 54-56).

Warning against failure to make peace with God, now! (Verses 57-59).

WARNING AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

Verse 1

"Under these circumstances . . ." refers to the time-lapse following Jesus' rising up and leaving the Pharisee's house where He had just dined.

"The leaven of the Pharisees . . ." is plainly identified here as hypocrisy; but Jesus used the same word in Matthew 16:6 as a reference to the teaching of that group.

"Leaven is the emblem of every active principle, good or bad, which possesses the power of assimilation."

"Hypocrisy . . ." means play-acting. The usage of the word in a Christian context refers it to insincere pretensions to religious piety. Our Lord's use of leaven is an emblem of both the teaching and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees shows that "the essence of their doctrine was hypocrisy; that being at once leaven and hypocrisy, its inevitable effect being to make hypocrites, to reproduce itself."

“His disciples first of all . . .” This has the meaning that “He addressed Himself first to His disciples, that is, to the twelve. “First” here means primarily.

Verse 2

This had the effect of warning the Twelve that they should not be guilty of a dissimulation with regard to the Pharisees; but it goes far beyond that and points to the final judgment when all the secrets of men shall be exposed.

This underscores the foolish stupidity of hypocrisy.

“Since God knows all and will ultimately reveal all, how foolish it is for one to be content with the form and shadow without reality.”

When the Lord comes, “He will bring to light hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)

Verses 3-5

In this passage, “Jesus makes it clear that mortal life is by no means man’s most valuable possession.” The body is not the real “I.” Although I have a body, the body is not I. Men should learn, therefore, not to accord fear to men, or any earthly powers, which have jurisdiction over the body alone, but not over the soul.

“My friends . . .” Jesus here contrasted His disciples, through this term of appreciation with His Pharisaical enemies.

“Fear the One . . .” The One to be feared is not Satan, as some have supposed, but Almighty God. “The power to cast into hell belongs to God, not to Satan.”

The usage here is similar to “the condemnation of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6), which has reference not to any condemnation the devil might bestow, but to the condemnation which God has pronounced against him.

Everett F. Harrison (Wycliffe Commentary, p. 234), “This refers to God and not to Satan, for Satan cannot determine the destiny of a human soul.”

“After He has killed . . .” Do these words then have reference to God’s killing? In a sense they do. “It is appointed for men to die once;” (Hebrews 9:27); and that appointment is surely of God.

It is a failure to see this which leads some to see Satan as the one to be feared; but the whole thesis of the Bible is “Fear God!”

“Authority to cast into hell . . .” This word, hell, is a translation of “Gehenna,” a Greek word used by Matthew, Mark, James 3:6, and Luke for the place of final punishment of the wicked.

Herschel H. Hobbs (*An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, p. 201), says, “If hell is not real fire, as some insist, then it is worse than fire; for the reality is always greater than the symbol.”

Verse 6

Matthew 10:29 records Jesus’ use of a variant of this illustration, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?”

H. Leo Boles (*Commentary on Luke*, p. 201), said, “The variation in price depended on the number purchased.” If one purchased four, the fifth was thrown in.

Verse 7

These words were spoken to ensure the Lord’s followers not to be intimidated by the explosive words of the Pharisees. God’s care of such members of His creation as these small birds is indeed a marvel to contemplate.

When it is remembered that these tiny creatures have descended through countless thousands of years, unaided by men, and in fact destroyed by men, it is evident that the most careful Providence should have protected them through centuries and cycles of time. The lesson of course, is that God will do more for men than for sparrows.

The emphasis in verses 6-7 is designed to allay the fears of the disciples, and it is an essential part of the warning against the Pharisees. The disciples must not be afraid of them, but on the other hand should not hesitate to confess Jesus.

Verses 8-9

Christ must have stated this teaching dozens of times in the years of His ministry; for in this appears one of the key principles of the kingdom He came to establish.

WARNING AGAINST BLASPHEMING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Verse 10

At the conclusion of the previous warning, Christ instructed that men should confess Him, the converse of that being that some would deny Him; and it was the habit of Israel's denying God through long ages, and now denying the Christ Himself, which prompted the warning here that there was a final and irrevocable sin about to be committed by them in denying the gospel about to be launched through the apostles under the power of the Holy Spirit.

The three dispensations of God's grace are in view here. Blaspheming God in the patriarchal period, or Christ as the culmination of the Mosaic period, or the Holy Spirit in the age of the gospel, were in the ascending order of seriousness.

H. Leo Boles (Commentary on Luke, p. 250), "The Holy Spirit with His teachings is the last God has to offer man; and, if one blasphemes the Holy Spirit by rejecting the New Testament, there is no chance for forgiveness." Jesus is God's last word to men.

Verses 11-12

Jesus identified the gospel to be preached by the Twelve as the message of the Holy Spirit. Here is also sound ground for viewing the New Testament as inspired of God. This promise pertained, not to all Christians, but to the Twelve.

WARNING AGAINST COVETOUSNESS

The interruption by the man who wanted Jesus to divide the inheritance prompted the teaching here; and it was included extemporaneously along with the other warnings but how it fits!

Verse 13

Under Jewish law, the older brother would have inherited two-thirds of the estate, and the younger brother one-third; since the older brother would have been the executor of the estate, the appeal here would seem to be that of a younger brother, implying either of two problems.

1. Either the elder brother had not given him his share.
2. Or, the younger brother was thinking of breaking the ancient custom of primogeniture which gave the double portion to the oldest son.

We may not be certain whether this was an appeal for redress under the existing law, or if it was a bold movement toward social reform.

Significantly, Jesus refused to be involved either way. It may have been that the younger brother thought he had a just claim, or he would not have taken it to Jesus.

This verse teaches that Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world. Christianity does not intermeddle with civil rights.

Herschel H. Hobbs (op. cit., p. 204) says, "Too often the church is asked to step into disputes between people, groups, or even races."

Richard C. Trench (Notes on the Parables of our Lord, p. 337), says, "The Master knew that a changed world would not solve man's problems as long as his biggest problem, sin in his heart, was within him."

This is a period in history when the ancient wisdom of Christ is being challenged and ignored; but men shall find through bitter experience that Christ was right in all that He said and did.

Just as Jesus refused to accept criminal jurisdiction in the case of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11), or to take sides in a political problem, as in the question regarding the tribute money (Matthew 22:17), He carefully avoided the snare and the rock upon which so many religious reformers have made shipwreck.

Richard C. Trench (Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, p. 337), summed it up thus, “It was from the inward to the outward that He would work.” And so should His church take heed that they follow in the Master’s steps.

Verses 14-15

Christ clearly implied by such a reply to the man who demanded redress against his brother that the problem was not social injustice, but covetousness, laying down the dictum that, “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he owns.”

“A man’s standard of living,” calculated by prevailing yardsticks, is in reality no such thing. Charles L. Childers (loc. cit.) says, “The world in every age has bypassed or refused to acknowledge the truth of this principle, and yet every age has abounded with proofs of its truth.”

“He said to them . . .” This plural indicates Jesus went on teaching the multitude, not that both brothers were present.

Covetousness is the great cancer eating out the heart of mankind; and the Lord in His teaching here moved to lead men away from it.

Human wants are insatiable; and getting only adds to the appetite for more. Paul associated it with moral uncleanness, calling it “idolatry.” (Ephesians 4:19; Colossians 3:5)

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

This parable was spoken to illustrate Jesus’ teaching, just spoken, on covetousness.

Verses 16-21

First, let it be observed that when blessings were multiplied upon this man, it only served to increase his covetousness. Charles L. Childers (loc. cit.), says, “Experience teaches that earthly losses are remedies for covetousness, while increases in worldly goods only arouse and provoke it.”

“I have no place to store my crops . . .” It is a mischievous error with which he states, “I have no place to store my crops.”

Richard C. Trench (op. cit., p. 341) said, “A very ancient commentator by the name of Ambrose has answered, “You have barns, the bosoms of the needy, the houses of the widows, the mouths of orphans and of infants.”

This man forgot God, His eternal soul, and others. The parable enables us to know what he said to himself, “Soul, . . . take ease.” But the parable enables us to know what God was saying at that very time, “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you.”

This man failed to recognize his status, not, as the true owner of his goods, nor even of his soul, which were his only in the sense of his being temporarily a steward of them.

The loan of an immortal spirit from God was about to be recalled, and the stewardship of his worldly possessions would pass, that very night to others.

“This night your soul is required!” The contrasts in the parable are dramatic: “many years” vs. “this night,” “many goods laid up” vs. “whose shall these things be?” etc.

“So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” The person who is not rich toward God is poor indeed. How pitifully brief is the span of life; how suddenly does the sun of life sink into the void; how quickly does the hope of mortal life decline!

In the light of all this, which every man certainly knows, how obtuse must he be accounted who vainly imagines that he is assured of many years of pleasure, ease, and prosperity!

WARNING AGAINST ANXIETIES

Verses 22-23

The argument Jesus made in these lines and the following is that God who cares for the grasses of the field and the myriad creatures of the lower creations will certainly not fail to look after His children.

Surely God would not take better care of sparrows than of His beloved family.

A second argument in the paragraph directed against anxieties includes the thoughts that anxiety is a lack of trust in God, and also that it cannot do any good anyway.

Verse 24

This is another of Christ's illustrations teaching the same lesson as that based upon His reference to the sparrows. (verses 6-7)

Verses 25-26

"His life's span . . ." Some versions say "his stature," either way presents no problem being true either way." The argument is from the less to the greater; and if one cannot add a trifling eighteen inches to the span of his life, why not trust God for all of it?

Verses 27-28

The problem addressed was anxiety; and the argument is that for all of man's feverish anxieties about his clothes, he really doesn't come out any better than the grass of the field, clothed in beautiful flowers! The teaching regards the futility of anxiety.

Verses 29-30

This verse is not teaching that a Christian should renounce thoughtful prudence in making a living for himself and family; but it is a demotion of even the basic things as food and drink to a lesser priority than that of seeking the kingdom of God.

Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 524) said, "Christ was by no means suggesting that faith makes work for a living unnecessary." Believers are not expected to be drones.

Charles L. Childers (Ibid), said; "Honest toil and the fulfillment of one's temporal obligations are not only consistent with faith; they are prerequisite to faith." (2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8)

Verse 31

This verse is the climax of the teaching. Seeking God's kingdom, His church with its privileges and blessings, should be the supreme goal of every life; and coupled with the admonition is God's promise that the seeker shall not lack the basic necessities.

Verse 32

The reason under which this sermon was delivered was that the Pharisees like one of their number at a later date, were breathing out threats and slaughter against the Lord, but Jesus calmly assured His chosen that, despite all that, the kingdom would indeed occur and that they should possess it.

Verses 33-34

There is no suggestion here that heaven can be purchased; but benevolence is laid down as a prime character of all who would enter heaven. Not even the fear of poverty should prevent almsgiving.

J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 754) said, "Christ addresses not all the disciples, but those who like the apostles, had received a call to leave all, and devote themselves to the work of the ministry."

H. Leo Boles (op. cit., p. 257) said, "This does not mean that a Christian should give up everything that he has to those who are not trying to serve God; neither does it mean that a Christian should give up what he has to those who are living lives of idleness and wickedness."

WARNING AGAINST UNREADINESS

Verses 35-38

Jesus used the analogy of the marriage feast in several different teachings, the one before us being peculiar to Luke

Analogies in the Bible:

The Lord who went to the feast is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The marriage feast is Jesus' ascension to glory.

The Lord's return is the Second Advent of Christ.

Loins girded, lamps burning is the faithful Christian service.

Second, third watches is the indefinite time of Second Advent.

The Lords serving servants is the eternal joys of the saved.

Watchfulness of servants is the watchfulness expected of Christians.

This parable forms a beautiful emphasis upon the warning against unreadiness and was apparently invented by the Savior for the sermon of this occasion.

If, at the Second Coming, the Lord's disciples should be found unprepared, their discomfiture would be complete.

Just as the servants should gird themselves and remain watchful and busy till their lord returned, even if it was very late, in the same manner, Christians should remain busy and watchful throughout the time preceding the Second Coming.

"Gird himself to serve . . ." is a reference to the loose, flowing garments, referred to by Plummer as a fatal hindrance to activity.

"Second watch, third watch . . ." J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 755) said, "They are the second and third of the Roman four watches, representing the day of night, and by metaphor, the unexpectedness of the Second Advent. The Jews only reckoned three, night watches."

Verses 39-40

Jesus was still preaching a warning against unreadiness: and He here dramatically shifted to another metaphor in which He compares His Second Coming to the unexpected arrival of a thief.

Note: Paul used the same figure of speech concerning the Second Coming in 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

At this point, Jesus' sermon was again interrupted, this time by the apostle Peter.

Verse 41

The answer Jesus gave was specific, "And what I say to you, I say to all." (Mark 13:27)

Verse 42

By the use of the word “steward,” Jesus includes all who undertake to do the Savior’s will and do service at His bidding. Herschel H. Hobbs (op. cit., p. 209), said, “The obvious meaning is that Peter and the other apostles, and all who serve the Lord faithfully, are such “faithful and wise stewards.”

Verses 43-44

“Whom his master finds so doing . . .” In these verses, Jesus returned again to His warning against unreadiness, pointing out here that the greatest and most comprehensive rewards shall be the portion of the disciples who shall be found ready for the coming of the Lord.

Verse 45

“My Master will be a long time in coming . . .” Again, in this section, Jesus guards against the error into which that generation was sure to fall. That error was expecting the Second Coming as an event that would surely take place in their lifetime.

“Beat the slaves . . . to get drunk . . .” Selfish and undisciplined conduct would come to mark the lives all who did not keep in mind the certainty of the Lord’s coming.

Verse 46

“Cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers . . .” refers to the final judgment, not to the displeasure of an earthly lord over the faithless conduct of a servant.

“The Master . . . will come. . .” emphasizes the certainty of Jesus’ coming to judge the quick and the dead. However long delayed, in the eyes of men, it shall nevertheless come to pass as the Lord promised.

“Cut him in pieces” . . . means, “to punish with terrible severity.” (J. S. Lamar, op. cit., p. 181)

The next two verses were probably intended by Jesus to soften somewhat the terrible metaphor He had just used. Severely as the wicked shall be punished, none will be punished any more than he deserves.

Verses 47-48

The application of the principles stated in these verses is beyond the power of men to find out; but the fact of their application is affirmed.

H. Leo Boles (op. cit., p. 262) said, "The punishment will be proportioned to the powers, gifts, opportunities, and knowledge of the offenders." Many speculations on "the degrees of punishment in hell" are founded here; but none of them afford any enlightenment on a subject that lies beyond the abilities of human exploration. With these words, Jesus concluded the warning against unpreparedness and moved to another division in His discourse.

WARNING AGAINST DIVISIONS DUE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Verse 49

Verses 41-48 were listed as a separate warning against unfaithfulness; but the emphasis on lack of preparedness (verse 47) shows a very close connection, making both warnings, in fact, an exhortation against unpreparedness.

This warning deals exclusively with the divisions that should be expected as a result of preaching God's word.

"I have come to cast fire upon the earth . . ." And just what is this fire? Some authors say, it is judgment, spiritual warmth, the Holy Spirit, discord and contention, the fire of Christian love, and the fire of heavenly love.

The fire is "the word of God." "Is not my word like fire? declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:29)

Understanding "fire" here as the word of God, that is, the gospel, gives the key as to why Jesus desired that it already be kindled on earth. However, the preaching of the gospel would bring pain, sorrow, and division, as well as joy, peace, and salvation. (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)

Verse 50

The path laid out for Jesus was extremely narrow and difficult. On the one hand, His was the task of convincing all men that he is King of kings and Lord of lords; and, on the other hand, this had to be done in such a manner as to frustrate Satan's purpose of getting our Lord killed as a seditionist.

Jesus told the woman of Sychar plainly that He was the Messiah, because, as a Samaritan woman, her word would not be accepted in a Jewish court; and, again, the Savior said to the man born blind, “You have not seen Him, and He it is Who speaks with you,” thus flatly declaring Himself to be the Son of God.

But here this teaching by Jesus came after the Sanhedrin had excommunicated the witness! (John 4:26; 9:37)

Verses 51-53

There is here a divine prophecy by Jesus to the effect that the gospel will cut across family lines. Men are not converted by families, but as individuals; and Jesus’ prophecy here has been fulfilled in every community on earth where the sacred message was preached.

Inherent in this conflict between light and darkness is the human divisions that are brought into view. Christ did not wish His followers to rally to His cause upon the basis of any false impressions they might have received.

True, Jesus was preaching love, joy, peace, good will, etc., but it should never be thought that conflict and division are negated by Christian principles.

To preach God’s love is to encounter hatred; to preach truth is to endure the furious opposition of error.

WARNING AGAINST LACK OF PERCEPTION

Verses 54-56

Men are much better at reading the signs of the weather and of nature, generally, than they are of discerning the times spiritually; of course, this is due to the fact that men apply themselves in one area, and not in the other. The implication of Jesus here is that a little diligence would have enabled them to have interpreted the times, no less than the signs of the weather.

It is well to inquire what were the signs of that time and why were the people so guilty in failing to discern them? They were the following:

The prophetic weeks of Daniel were expiring.

The great herald, John the Baptist, “that Elijah,” had come.

The scepter had departed from Judah. (Genesis 49:10)

A “sign from heaven” had occurred at Jesus’ baptism.

It had been revealed to aged Simeon that the Christ would appear in his lifetime; and he was dead by the time of the events here.

All the world expected the coming of some mighty one.

The Christ Himself had appeared on the Jordan river, and been baptized and identified by John as “the Son of God.”

WARNING AGAINST PROCRASTINATION

Like every good sermon, this one concludes with an exhortation to do something now.

Verses 57-59

The exhortation here is for action now.

“Even on your way judge what is right . . .” Do not wait till judgment is set, but make an agreement now.”

J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 755) said, “Why, even without signs, do you not judge rightly of me and my doctrine by the natural light of reason and of conscience?”

The analogies in this teaching are:

1. Just as the human system of courts decides human affairs, in the larger sphere of time and eternity, it is God, the Judge of all who makes decisions.
2. All men are represented here and “on the way” to court, that is moving inexorably to that moment when all shall stand before Judge.
3. The man in the parable had an opportunity to settle before he got to court; and so do men have a chance to make peace with God now.
4. While it was the adversary who provided the occasion for reconciliation in the parable, it is different spiritually. The one who is with us “on the way” is Christ, who also shall judge men.

5. Letting the matter reach the judge can result only in disaster for the offender; and the man who does not prepare to meet God in advance of the judgment shall likewise encounter disaster.
6. Notice the necessary implication, throughout, that the offender on the way to court had a very poor case, there being no way that “justice” would decide in his favor.
7. Hence, the necessary deduction that preparation should be made now.
8. Jesus’ use of an analogy which makes Him “the adversary” is I illuminating. Such was the hostility of that generation that they would instantly have recognized Him in the comparison.

William Barclay (op. cit., p 175) wrote, “Notice that the whole assumption is that the defendant has a bad case which will inevitably go against him.”

The universal wickedness of all men appears in such an assumption. Jesus’ early statement that they should “of themselves” make a correct judgment is clear in this.

Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 267) said, He was saying, “Why can you not be wise enough to humble yourselves and be reconciled to God—be converted—instead of risking the inevitable consequences of coming to the Judgment as an incorrigible adversary of God?”

“Until you have paid the very last cent . . .” This is not a promise that after one has paid for his sins in hell, he shall be released as having discharged his debt.

Thus concluded the Master’s sermon with a powerful persuasion for His hearers to be converted before it would be too late.

H. Leo Boles (op. cit., p. 276) said of men, “All of us are moving on to the courtroom of the Great Judge,” and all “should make peace with their adversary while they have opportunity to do so.”

CHAPTER 13

On the final tour preceding His crucifixion, Jesus worked and taught the things recorded in this chapter: the double call to repentance (Verses 1-5), the parable of the fruitless fig tree (Verses 6-9), another Sabbath miracle (Verses 10-17), twin

parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Verses 18-21), the narrow door (Verses 22-30).

Next was the threat from the Pharisees (Verses 31-33), and the lament over the Holy City (Verse 34-35).

Verse 1

Luke alone has documented this tragic episode from the violent, bloody period of which it was so typical.

The ruthless act of Pilate in this glimpse of it, is fully consonant with Pilate's evil character, as invariably attested to by all the histories of those times.

The implication here is that Pilate had sent a detachment of soldiers into the temple itself to execute bloodily wrath on certain Galileans in the act of worshiping, their blood being mingled with that of the sacrifices they were offering.

“Reported to Him about the Galileans . . .” There was manifest a certain self-righteousness in the bearers of this message to Jesus, as if they had been saying, “Of course, we are not wicked sinners like them.”

Verse 2

“Do you suppose . . . these Galileans were greater sinners . . .?” Of course, that is exactly what they thought, having in themselves the ancient prejudice reaching as far back as Job, and which attributes every calamity upon men as the just punishment of their sins.

Job's friends accused him of sin, their accusations being based on his sufferings; and likewise the citizens of Malta supposed Paul to have been a murderer, solely upon the basis of their observance that a poisonous serpent had bitten him. (Acts 28:4)

Ray Summers (Commentary on Luke, p. 165) said, “This verse suggests that Jesus detected a note of pious superiority in the report.” In as much as Jesus' audience had not suffered such a terrible fate as the Galileans, they were glorying in the misassumption that they did not deserve punishment.

Even the twelve were infected with the same false views, as evidenced in John 9:2; the false philosophy which came into view was vigorously condemned by the Master.

Verse 3

The great truth uttered here, and repeated in the same words two verses later, was for the purpose of removing the false security of His hearers, both Galileans and dwellers in Jerusalem.

Israel had rejected God's call to repentance as delivered, first by John the Baptist and again by Jesus Christ; and the impact of this verse is that God rejects the human device of supposing that some are righteous in a relative sense, because they are not like such notorious sinners as the Galileans, and that the Almighty demands repentance of all men.

"All likewise perish . . ." Israel is the primary target of this commandment, although, of course, in the general sense it applies to every man on earth.

These words mean that Israel would "perish in the same way that the Galileans did, that is, by the Roman sword."

John Wesley (Notes on the NT, p. 253) said, "And so they did. There was a remarkable resemblance between the fate of these Galileans and of the main body of the Jewish nation; they were slain by the Roman sword; perished in the temple itself, and were literally buried under its ruins."

However, it is a serious mistake to see God's call to repentance as a directive for Israel alone. Christ was here stimulating "all thoughtful people to repentance facing the prospect of Judgment."

Verse 4

"The tower of Siloam . . ." points to some construction connected with the pool of that name, and having to do with the aqueduct that brought water into it, and perhaps also with the Roman fortifications of the city.

Josephus Flavius (Life and Works, p. 677) wrote that "Pilate expended the sacred treasure which is called *corban* upon aqueducts, whereby he brought water from a distance of four hundred furlongs, (about fifty miles)."

Upon the presumption that the eighteen men were working on the construction when the tower fell, it is easy to see how the Jews would have accounted them especially sinful; for not only were they working for the hated Romans, but they were being paid with money that Pilate had robbed from the temple treasure.

Jesus rejected that notion that such conduct was the reason they were killed. Christ Himself; used it in exactly the same manner as He used the other incident, demanding all men (and specially Israel) that they should repent or perish.

Verse 5

This verse in a single short paragraph shows:

- (1) That Christ frequently repeated sayings, as indicated throughout the gospels.
- (2) That the necessity of repentance on the part of all who would be saved is absolute and invariable.
- (3) That Christ thus avoided any implication that Galileans should repent, whereas the Jew were in any manner exempt from it.

Before leaving this paragraph, the universal command that all should repent should be identified as the most important thing in it.

Along with faith and baptism, repentance is established as one of the preconditions of salvation, as clearly enunciated by the apostle Peter. (Acts 2:38)

These ancient Jews supposed that they did not need to repent, since Pilate had not murdered them and no tower had fallen upon them.

Justification is based upon nothing that a sinner either believes or does, but upon the merit of Christ alone. Repentance, however, stands between every man and the merit which is in Christ Jesus. Christ's call to repentance was next extended to include a third warning, that of the parable of the barren fig tree.

Verses 6-9

Analogies in this parable:

Owner of the vineyard is the heavenly Father.

The vinedresser is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The vineyard is the world.

The fig tree is the Jewish nation.

Three years is the first three years of Jesus' ministry.

Fruitlessness is Israel's rejection of Jesus.

This year also is Jesus' final year of preaching.

You shall cut it down is God's judgment against Israel.

Although the fig tree in this parable primarily stands for Israel, "the fig tree symbolizes also every individual who remains unrepentant," (Norval Geldenhuys, *op. cit.*, p. 273.)

John William Russell, *Compact Commentary on the NT*, p.173 says, "In this the fig tree is the Jewish nation, God the owner, Christ the vinedresser. The fig tree is condemned for fruitlessness, but the vinedresser asks for more time . . . in order that it might yet bear fruit. If not, that is, if the Jewish or any other nation or individual fails to bear fruit . . . it is to be destroyed."

ANOTHER SABBATH HEALING

Verse 10

This is the last instance in Luke, where Jesus appears teaching in a synagogue.

Verse 11

"A sickness caused by a spirit . . ." If this had been all that was recorded on the object of this miracle, hers could be understood as a natural disability, one of the ailments to which all flesh is susceptible. The Lord's declaration (verse 16) that this woman was one whom Satan had bound, casts it in a different light.

Verse 12

Although the woman's presence in that assembly could have been a silent plea for the help of God, it was Jesus who saw her, signaled her to come near, and announced her healing, the initiative clearly being with Jesus throughout.

Verse 13

All of the miracles of Jesus had the qualities in evidence here, being effortlessly performed with total authority, and also instantaneous.

Verse 14

It was a day of reckoning and glorifying God by the woman who had been healed, and indeed by the whole community; but there was one whose face clouded with anger and resentment.

The petty Sabbath regulations which his class had imposed upon God's worship had been set aside; and he moved at once to protest, not against Jesus directly, for he was afraid to do that, but striking at our Lord through the multitude whom he rebuked for coming on the Sabbath day to be healed.

"The synagogue official . . ." "(This was) probably the head of the council of ten men who controlled the synagogue." (Charles L. Childers, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, p. 538)

Verse 15

"You hypocrites . . ." Note, "hypocrites" is plural.

This shows that Jesus included all the managers of the synagogue in this condemnation, and not merely the one who had spoken against Him.

In what were they hypocrites? As a matter of fact, they were thoroughly hypocritical in practically everything.

H. D. M. Spence (*Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 16, Luke II, p.3) said, Every possible indulgence was to be shown in cases where their own interests were involved; no mercy or indulgence was to be thought of, however, where only the sick and the poor were involved.

They pretended that it was in harmony with God's law to do more for an animal on the Sabbath day than for a human being. Christ perfectly kept all of God's true Sabbath laws; it was only the human additives thereunto that He denounced and openly flouted.

Verse 16

“Daughter of Abraham . . .” These words forbid any imputation of gross sin and immorality to the woman Jesus healed, but at the same time they deepen the mystery of how Satan had bound one of the true spiritual seed of Abraham. However it was, Jesus had power to heal her.

The contrast is vivid. The sinful rulers of the synagogue loosed a donkey on the Sabbath; Jesus loosed this precious woman.

Anthony Lee Ash (*The Gospel According to Luke*, p. 51) said, “His critics would allow more for an animal than for this woman. Was it more important to loose an animal or to loose a person (note the parallel between untie and loosed)? Jesus made His case more vivid by calling the woman daughter of Abraham and by noting how long she had been afflicted.”

Verse 17

Here surfaces one of the outstanding characteristics of the writings of Luke, who so frequently stressed the rejoicing that followed the works and teachings of the Master.

Ray Summers (*op. cit.*, p. 168) said, “The people rejoiced at all the things Jesus was doing. This is a pattern in Luke and in Acts—the success of Jesus and His cause versus the failure of the opposition.”

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Verses 18-19

Analogies of the Bible:

The small seed is the small beginning of the church.

The large tree is the size of historic Christendom.

The birds are evil, extraneous elements associated with the kingdom.

The garden is the world.

The one who sowed the seed is Christ, or God.

The seed sown is the word of God.

The tree is the visible church of all ages.

This parable and that of the leaven are not exactly like those in Matthew. Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 540) said, "There, the parables are reported as part of Jesus' Galilean ministry; on the other hand, Luke is reporting another and later ministry, the Perea."

It is agreed by all that the garden is the world where the kingdom has been planted by the Father, that the growth represents the spread of the kingdom, and that the great size of the mustard tree shows the future might and power of Christianity.

Just as the mustard seed is small, so were the beginnings of the Lord's kingdom.

Parable of the Leaven

Verses 20-21

Despite the fact that "leaven" often is used of something evil, such as the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, the declaration is that "the kingdom of God is like leaven," forcing the conclusion that it stands for the opposite of evil in this passage.

This and the parable of the mustard seed are in fact twin parables, setting forth different characteristics of the kingdom of God. The mustard seed which produced the great plant teaches the ultimate mighty extent and power of the kingdom as it would appear visibly to all mankind.

The parable of the leaven, however, stresses the invisible power "hidden" from all human observation, by producing such marvelous results.

Analogies of the Bible:

The leaven is the teaching of Christ.

The meal is the people who receive the truth.

The quality of leaven that changes the whole mass into one kind is the transforming power of the gospel.

Leaven rising is the nature of the church's progress.

A little leaven, given time, can change a great mass is the vast power of historical Christianity.

A woman took the leaven is the church as the teacher of the kingdom message.

Three measures is the three divisions of humanity.

Three measures must be understood as something significant.

H. Leo Boles (op. cit., p. 274) said, the three measures was “the amount usually used for one meal.”

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 169) said, it is the amount of meal in three measures as “four and one-half pecks,” which goes beyond any ordinary meal.

E. J. Tinsley (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 148) said, “The three measures was “half a hundredweight of flour.”

William Barclay (op. cit., pp. 186-187) gives an outline of the teaching of this parable saying:

1. God’s kingdom starts from the smallest beginnings, a tiny pinch of leaven.
2. The power of the kingdom works unseen, as leaven.
3. The kingdom’s power works from the inside, as leaven.
4. The power to change humanity (the lump) must come from outside itself, the leaven being a power not of the lump at all, but from without.

It is not in man to transform himself. The leaven of God from without must do it. In both of these remarkable parables, there is evidenced the ultimate power and extent of Christ’s kingdom. The teaching in both of them is stamped with an originality and power which only Christ could have imparted.

Verse 22

“Proceeding . . .” must not be understood as taking the most direct route to Jerusalem; for, actually, this journey required several months, and involved a circuitous progression which would allow Jesus to visit as many places as possible on this final tour; and yet, all the while, His invariable purpose remained that of

proceeding to Jerusalem where He would fulfill His purpose of dying to save all men.

He interrupted this journey no less than three times, going to Jerusalem each time, and then returning to resume the journey. (Luke 17:11)

Verse 23

“Just a few who are being saved . . .” Jesus did not answer that question, rather stressing the fact that every man should make it as sure as he can that he himself is saved.

Verse 24

Jesus said, “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

CASUAL SEEKERS AT THE NARROW GATE

I. Behold here is a door which is most desirable that man should enter.

- A. Because it is the gate of man’s spiritual home.
 - 1. Our citizenship is there. (Philippians 3:20)
 - 2. Our treasure is there. (Matthew 6:20)
 - 3. The hope of everyman is there. (Hebrews 6:19)
 - 4. Our Lord is there. (John 14:1-3)
 - 5. Our names are written there. (Luke 10:20)
- B. Because it is the gate of the city of refuge. (Hebrews 6:18)
- C. Because this is the gate of eternal life.
- D. Because it is the gate of escape from the fate of the wicked.

II. How is it, that some shall seek to enter and not be able?

- A. Some may not enter because of the pride of life. (1 Peter 5:6)
- B. Procrastination will prevent some from entering. (2 Corinthians 6:2)
- C. The casual seeker cannot enter. The word “strive” in the text means to “agonize.”

- D. Some carry contraband. Many things must be abandoned by all who would enter this door.
- E. Some wait till the door is “shut.”
- F. Some never try at all, thinking they are already in. Note: The case of Abner (2 Samuel 3:33).

--Adapted from Charles H. Spurgeon.

Verse 25

“Shuts the door . . .” These words have the effect of placing the scene Jesus spoke of here at the final judgment. Only then, may it be said that the door is shut.

Alfred Plummer (Gospel According to St. Luke, in loco.) says, “Jesus does not say that many shall strive in vain to enter, but that there will be many who seek in vain to enter, after the time of salvation is past.”

J. S. Lamar (op. cit., p. 189) taught the same thing. “Jesus does not say nor mean that many will seek to enter in at the strait gate and not be able; but said that they will seek to enter heaven without going through the strait gate.”

“Strait is an old English word meaning narrow.” (Everett H. Harrison, op. cit., p. 239)

Verses 26-30

“Weeping and gnashing of teeth . . . Abraham and Isaac and Jacob . . . and all the prophets . . .” Jesus is stating that these ancient worthies are to be reckoned among those eternally saved. In view of the sins of which these, and other Old Testament worthies, were guilty, there must be found a vast ground of encouragement for disciples of all ages.

Not sinless, but proper repentance and acknowledgement of their need of forgiveness were their dominant characteristics.

“Come from east and west and from north and south.” The universality of the kingdom of God is seen in these words.

“Recline at the table in the kingdom of God.”

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 171) says “This graphically portrays the Messianic banquet, a symbol of the joys of the age in which the Messiah shall rule.” But the passage goes beyond that to include the eternal joys of the redeemed in heaven.

“Weeping and gnashing of teeth . . .” H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 5) says, “They indicate, as far as merely earthly words and symbols can, the utter misery of those unhappy ones who find themselves shut out from the kingdom in the world to come.”

“Yourselves being cast out . . .” “Many of the fleshly seed of Abraham, through their rejection of Christ shall fail to attain unto the promise to Abraham.”

Last first . . . first last . . .” These words mean that the final judgment will bring many surprises, a fact Jesus often stressed.

WARNING FROM THE PHARISEES

Verses 31-33

Jesus was somewhere in the area of Trans-Jordan, or possibly still in Galilee, both being within the political jurisdiction of Herod, but the idea is rejected which would view this blunt word from the Pharisees as anything but a lie.

John William Russell (op. cit., p. 174) said, “They were not telling the truth. There was no reason for thinking Herod, although a man of base character, wished to kill Jesus.”

When Jesus finally appeared before Herod (23:11), that ruler initiated no action against Him, except to mock Him and send Him back to Pilate; and by including this in his record, Luke documented the Pharisees’ falsehood.

What the Pharisees really intended, of course, was to frighten Jesus into returning to Jerusalem, where, of course, the Pharisees planned themselves to kill Him.

“Go and tell that fox . . .” The Greek word used here means literally, “she fox.” By the choice of a feminine word, Jesus might have intended a reference to Herodias, Herod’s consort, whose wicked influence had caused the murder of John the Baptist.

Greek-speaking people regarded a fox as the opposite of bold and courageous. Jesus' epithet evaluated the wicked Herod as a small, weak, sly and cunning character, unworthy of honor and respect.

"Today and tomorrow and the third day . . ." this was relatively but a short while; and by these words, Christ was saying that He did not plan to be in Herod's territory very long anyway. Although the Lord would not be frightened into leaving, His plans already called for His progression on to Jerusalem.

"It cannot be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem . . ." Jesus fully knew that going to Jerusalem would not procure safety for Himself. He had repeatedly prophesied that His death would occur in that city; and by these words, Christ signaled the Pharisees that He knew all about their wicked plans to murder Him.

LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

Verses 34-35

Jesus made a number of trips into Jerusalem during His last circuit. Note the words, "How often I wanted to gather your children together."

"How often . . ." Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 384) said, "This is a reference to the fact (as expressly stated by John) that Jesus, especially during the last period of His public appearance, visited Jerusalem on more than one occasion.

There is a tendency nowadays, even among the more liberal critics, to admit that the fourth Gospel was, after all, correct."

"As a hen gathers her brood under her wings . . ." The literature of all ages reveals nothing that compares with the tenderness and love of Jesus, as manifested toward the Holy City.

"And you would not have it . . ." Deeply as Christ desired the redemption of Jerusalem, the sovereign will of humanity was nevertheless respected; and it was the will of Israel to reject her King.

"Your house . . ." is a reference to the sacred temple, the pride of every Jew; but a change of status in the magnificent building appeared in these words. At first, the temple was God's house; but when it no longer served the ends that God

intended, it became “theirs.” This shows that all religious things are God’s only so long as the observance of God’s will is connected with them.

“Desolate . . .” What a dreadful word! Once the holy Shekinah was there within the Holy of Holies; but after Christ was rejected, there was nothing within. Nor would the temple long survive Jesus’ pronouncement against it. Within that generation it would fall forever.

“Blessed is He who comes . . .” It was apparently by design that the Holy Spirit used a word by which is, by definition, indefinite and ambiguous.

The meaning is that God has not closed the door upon Israel; they have closed it themselves; nor shall God’s favor be lavished upon them any more “until” they change.

Christ closed His last public discourse with these same words. His use of them here seems to have been prompted by the lying warning of the Pharisees whose intent on His murder was crystal clear to the Son of God.

CHAPTER 14

This section of Luke (14:1 through 17:10) is made up practically altogether of “material which Luke alone reports.”

This chapter recounts the healing of the man with dropsy at the Pharisee’s feast (Verses 1-6), the teaching on humility which Jesus addressed to the guests (Verses 7-11), advice to the host regarding his list of guests (Verses 12-14), the parable of the slighted invitation (Verses 15-24), and Jesus’ pronouncement on the cost of discipleship (Verses 25-35).

Verse 1

“Went into the house of one of the leaders . . .” In view of the opposition of the Pharisees and rulers to Jesus, it is a little surprising that He should have been invited and that He should have accepted such an invitation; but this is clear in the light of two considerations.

1. Jesus never refused any man’s invitation to hospitality . . . and never abandoned hope of men.
2. The Pharisee intended to use the occasion against Jesus.

Adam Clarke (Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. V, p. 451) said, “Professing friendship and affection, he invited our blessed Lord to his table, merely that he might have a more favorable opportunity of watching His conduct, that he might accuse Him, and take away His life.”

“On the Sabbath . . .” The following miracles were performed on the Sabbath day.

The healing of Simon’s wife’s mother. (Luke 4:38)

The healing of the man with a withered hand. (Luke 6:6)

The healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda. (John 5:9)

The healing of the man born blind. (John 9:14)

The healing of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum. (Mark 1:21)

The healing of the man with dropsy, as recorded here.

Thus the Pharisees had every reason to believe that if confronted with the Jesus would surely heal on any Sabbath day; therefore they contrived the incident before us.

The invitation for Jesus to have a Sabbath meal, the dramatic appearance of a man with dropsy, and the presence of many distinguished guests “had been carefully planned among the Pharisees as a trap for Jesus.”

S. Lamar (The NT Commentary, Vol. II, p. 191) said, “The Jews took only two meals on week days, but they had three meals on the Sabbath. That extra meal was celebrated after the morning worship and was the big meal of the entire week.”

Charles L. Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary, p. 546) added, “The only restriction upon those feasts was that the food had to be cooked the day before.”

Verse 2

Spectators often entered the house to witness an eastern banquet; John William Russell (Compact Commentary on the NT, p. 175) noted, “Other schemes of the Pharisees on like occasions make it very probable that the Pharisees had placed Him there.”

Of course, all eyes were fixed upon Jesus; as the previous verse said, “They were watching Him.” The word used for watching in the text means “interested and sinister espionage.”

Verse 3

Significantly, Jesus answered not the words of His watchers, but their thoughts.

Like human vultures, those evil men were waiting for Jesus to fall into their trap; but He took it all in at a glance, snaring them with one of their own devices, a dilemma. If they said, “Yes,” they had no case; if they said, “No,” they would have spoken a lie. “The law did not condemn such acts of mercy; and they undoubtedly saw the point of the Master’s question.” Charles L. Childers (*op. cit.*, p. 546).

Verse 4

Astounded by the position in which Jesus had placed them, and being unable to discover some means of saving face, they simply remained silent; whereupon Jesus healed the man and sent him on his way.

Verse 5

It was well known that the Pharisees would indeed do such things on the Sabbath; and here Jesus pointed out the first-of-three reversed ethics in the Pharisees thinking, the first being that they valued property above a man.

Herschel H. Hobbs (*An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, p. 227) said, “Jesus did not condemn this act of mercy (to animals); but He did condemn their attitude toward men.”

Verse 6

Herschel H. Hobbs also said, “They did not want to admit that they valued their law and property more than they valued a man; but their attitude spoke louder than their words.”

Verse 7

“Parable” here means a piece of advice expressing humility.

“The chief seats . . .” In the mixture of Jewish, Roman, Greek, and Persian cultures at that time, we cannot be sure which were the “chief seats.”

The Talmud ranked three seats on a couch by making the center chief, the one on the right second, and the one on the left third!

Whatever was accounted the most honorable seats, there was a vulgar scramble among the guests on that occasion, each man jockeying with others for the better places.

Verse 8

“Someone more distinguished than you . . .” What an irony is this! To egotistical social climbers like those guests, it was unheard-of consideration that a “more honorable” man than any of them might have been invited.

Verses 9-10

In verse 8 Jesus begins with the assumption of being invited to a “marriage feast;” and since the feast where this admonition was spoken was not that kind of feast, it is not amiss to look for the analogy Jesus had in mind.

Was the Lord merely passing out some advice, or is there a deeper meaning?

In watching the selfish scrambling for the chief seats, it suddenly appeared to Jesus that the unseemly thing going on in His presence was typical of a far greater sin on the part of that same class of people. Had they not indeed usurped the chief seats in the theocracy for themselves, the honor always going not to the worthy, but to the arrogant usurper?

“When you are invited . . .” Who is this, if not Christ? The Master of the Messianic banquet was indeed before them, and He was confronted with the harsh necessity of demoting the proud, arrogant, and unspiritual priests from the chief seats that had usurped and conveying them to ‘publicans and harlots’ instead, such persons being more honorable than the usurpers.

A decent humiliation on the part of the ruling priesthood would have saved them the shame which came upon them.

Verse 11

Jesus concluded this remarkable teaching; and it is one which all men should heed. In this teaching of Jesus, He announced the eternal ethic of humility.

How does mankind cultivate humility? They can do this in two ways.

1. They can consider the facts. No man is wise in any ultimate sense. Man's life is short-lived; his days are few and full of trouble; at his best, man is above only a few of his contemporaries, and that only for a brief moment of time.
2. They can look at the lives and achievements of others which exceed their own in excellence and glory.

SPECIAL WORD TO THE HOST

The Lord had naturally included his host in the remarks addressed to the guests; but He reserved a very special word for the host himself.

Verse 12

Norval Geldenhuys (op, cit., p. 391) said, "One should not invite such persons exclusively."

Adam Clark (op. cit., p 452) wrote, "Our Lord certainly does not mean that a man should not entertain at particular times his friends, etc.; but what He (Jesus) indicates here is charity to the poor."

H. D. M. Spence (Pulpit Commentary Vol. 16, Luke II, p.24) wrote, "That Jesus did not mean to forbid our entertaining those whom we love. He means simply, "In view of the life to come, thou canst do better still."

J. S. Lamar (op. cit., p. 193) wrote, "Jesus does not mean to prohibit the invitation and entertainment of those who might be able to reciprocate the courtesy; but to condemn (1) the motive with which it is sometimes done, and (2) the exclusiveness growing out of such motive, which limits the invitation to this class."

There is far too much of the same thing that Jesus condemned in the hospitality ones sees today; and, in not a few churches, there are little cliques

engaged almost exclusively in entertaining themselves; and what, we are certain, is wrong.

John Wesley (Notes on the NT, p. 257) wrote, "That is, I do not bid thee call thy friends or thy neighbors. Our Lord leaves those offices of humanity and courtesy as they were, and teaches a higher duty."

Perhaps Jesus was outlining here just what true righteousness and genuine hospitality actually are; and if that is the case, one confronts here a righteousness that is above all human achievement of it. This is what men should do, regardless of the fact that all men find themselves unable, absolutely, to live up to this ethic.

Verse 13

H. Leo Boles (Commentary on Luke, p. 285) says, "It is far better to relieve the distressed than to set a feast for those who do not need it." A man is not in the true sense hospitable who entertains only those who can entertain him. J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 257) wrote, "Such interested hospitality is not wrong, but it does not lay up treasure in heaven."

With this word to the host, Jesus pinpointed the third of three distortions, or reverse ethics, which marked the conduct of His hearers.

In verse 5, it was love of property elevated over love of men. In verse 7, it was pride and conceit elevated over love of men; and in verse 7, it was pride and conceit elevated above humility; and here in these verses it was selfishness elevated above genuine hospitality.

Verse 14

This verse clearly shows that Jesus had in mind the instruction of His audience in how to lay up treasures in heaven.

"The resurrection of the righteous . . ." Everett F. Harrison (Wycliffe Commentary, p. 241) believes this verse supports the idea of a double resurrection, one of the righteous, one of the wicked, separated by an interval of time," but there is no agreement with that thought here.

The men of Nineveh and the Queen of the South, separated by centuries of time, will nevertheless arise in judgment with the contemporary generation of Jesus. (Matthew 12:41-42)

Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott (Commentary on the Holy Bible, Vol. 5, Luke, p. 276) stated, “The exclusive mentioning of rewards to the righteous, does not in the least imply that the wicked shall not receive their reward, which is so clearly stated elsewhere.”

PARABLE OF THE SLIGHTED INVITATION

Verse 15

Trench explained what was probably in the mind of that guest who thus spoke in Jesus’ presence.

Richard Trench (Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, p. 362) wrote, “When we keep in mind what were the Jewish hopes concerning the setting up of the kingdom of God (that it would be ushered in by a glorious festival), it is easy to perceive how this man’s mind passed on to the great festival which (in their view) was to accompany the resurrection.”

Such a carnal view of God’s kingdom was wrong, of course; but there was an even greater wrong in the assumption of the guest himself and all the other Jews would enjoy such a Messianic banquet to the exclusion of all others, especially Gentiles.

In the following parable, Jesus moved to correct such false views and to warn that His hearers were in danger of missing the kingdom of God altogether.

Verse 16

The man is God.

The great supper is God’s kingdom.

Many are the Israelites.

Verses 17-20

The servant is God’s messengers such as the Twelve and the Seventy.

Supper time is the advent of the Messiah.

Theophylact understood “the servant” to be none other than the Suffering Servant, Jesus Himself; and others have supposed him to represent John the Baptist; but Trench is obviously correct.

Richard C. Trench (Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, p.364) wrote, “We beheld in Him, not the heralds who preceded, but those who accompanied the King, the evangelists and apostles . . . those who bade the Jews to enter on the enjoyment of those good things, no longer far off, but here.”

“Everything is ready now . . .” The fullness of time had come. The Messenger of the covenant had arrived and would shortly make atonement for sin. The first invitation (verse 16) was the call of the Hebrews to be the chosen people and to receive the promises made to Abraham.

This renewal of the invitation (verse 17) through Christ and His apostles was the final call of Israel to the feast of the kingdom of God. Such a second invitation was customary in the East, and it would have been a serious breach of etiquette to have omitted it, a breach that Plummer described as “equivalent to cancelling the more general invitation. To refuse the second invitation was an insult, equivalent among the Arab tribe to a declaration of war.” Alfred Plummer (op. cit., en loco)

H. Leo Boles (op. cit., p. 288) insisted that, “These are not flimsy and ridiculous excuses, as some have sought to make them, but the most important excuses that could be given.”

Ray Summers (Commentary on Luke, p. 179) called them “ridiculous and humorous.”

There is evident a progressive unwillingness to attend in the excuses offered. One pleads necessity; the second pleads his will not to go; and the third said flatly, “I cannot,” but did not bother to ask any release from his obligation.

In the case of this last, a marriage did exempt the bridegroom from war. (Deuteronomy 24:5; 20:70), but not from a feast it was his duty to attend.

There was really no compelling reason behind any of the excuses. Viewing land or proving oxen which had already been purchased cannot be looked upon as valid reasons for their refusal; and, in the case of the man with a bride, where

was there ever a bride who would not have wished to attend a feast in the home of a rich man?

The three excuses have this in common, that “They all plead something that pertains to self, and all place the gratification of selfish desires above duty and obligation.” (J. S. Lamar, *op. cit.*, p. 195)

These three who made excuses stand for the Jews who rejected the invitation to receive the kingdom. There had come about, through ages, a deterioration of what the concept of the kingdom meant to the chosen people. Especially among the leaders, a malignant carnality had distorted their thoughts of what God’s kingdom would be; and, for that reason, they insultingly rejected Christ.

Verse 21

The man giving the feast here moved to a wider circle than before; and this corresponds to the call of publicans, harlots, and others of those classes despised by the leaders of Israel. It is the anger of God for their rejection of the Son of God which is indicated.

Verse 22

Not even the inclusion of that wider circle of beneficiaries had the desired effect of filling the feast with guests; and God, no less than nature, abhors a vacuum; nor will the purpose of the Almighty be frustrated by willful and rebellious men.

Verse 23

H. D. M. Spence (*op. cit.*, p. 26) wrote, “This time the master of the house invites to his banquet the Gentiles.” All men will be laid under tribute to provide guests for the Father’s kingdom banquet.

“Compel them . . .” indicates only a moral and rational force is indicated.

NOTE: “Long ago, Augustine used this text as a justification for religious persecution. It was used as a defense, and even as a command, to coerce people into the Christian faith. It was used as a defense for the inquisition, the thumb-screw, the rack, the threat of death and imprisonment—and for all those things which are the shame of Christianity. (William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 200)

Christ never intended that kind of constraint to bring people into His kingdom; and, “The church which tolerates, encourages, and practices persecution is not the church of Christ; and no man can be of such a church without endangering his salvation. (Adam Clark, op. cit., p. 455)

“That My house may be filled . . .” These words are a definite suggestion that God intends to redeem from earth “a certain number of souls.” H. D. M, Spence (op. cit., p. 27) wrote, “The invitation will therefore be continued and consequently the history of our race prolonged, until that number be reached.”

Verse 24

Jesus no longer addressed a servant (as did the lord in the parable), but said, “I tell you (plural),” meaning those very men in His presence, that “none of those who were invited (and refused) shall taste of My dinner.”

Thus Jesus identified Himself with the Father in heaven and Himself as the one giving the dinner, and the dinner as the kingdom He came to set up.

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 179) pointed out that Jesus did not mean “that no Jews would participate in God’s mercy, but that none of those who rejected it would experience it.”

Countless thousands of people were following Jesus, but the vast majority of them had no practical understanding of what following Jesus actually entailed.

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 397) wrote, “He desired to check this light-hearted manner of following Him, so . . . He lays down the absolute demands for everyone who wishes to be His disciple.”

What Jesus did strongly suggests what Jesus did to the great throng in Capernaum who had followed Him after the miracle of feeding the five thousand. He stunned them with that metaphor of eating the flesh and drinking His blood. (John 6:52f) That cooled their superficial ardor.

REGARDING THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Verses 25-26

The simple meaning of this astounding declaration is that one, in order to be a disciple of Christ, must love Him more than any other being, not even excluding self.

“Hate . . .” as applied here to father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters means “to love less,” and is void of the sentiments usually associated with that word today. Loving the Lord more than self is the plan of salvation.

Verse 27

The reference here is to a patient, submissive acceptance of the ills and misfortunes of life; but Jesus plainly meant that to be His disciples one would have to hate his own life to the extent of willingness to accept crucifixion at the hands of the Romans for the sake of fidelity to Christ. The background against which Jesus spoke these words proves this to be true.

Only twenty-four years previously, about A.D. 6, “The Romans crucified hundreds of followers of the rebel, Judas the Gaulonite . . . Crucifixion was a common spectacle both before and after that date.” (Ibid., p. 400.)

Therefore, Jesus’ mention of bearing a “cross” could not have failed, in the audience which heard Him, to mean the most horrible of deaths.

Verses 28-30

Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott (op. cit., p. 276) said, “All that take upon them a profession of religion, undertake to build a tower.” The Savior’s teaching here is that the endeavor should be attempted in full view of the enormous cost of it. Men must bid farewell to the dearest earthly ties, mortify the lusts of the flesh, set their affections on heavenly things, and subordinate all earthly prospects to the will of the Master.

All of the details of this parable and the one following are inert factors. J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 757) said, “They simply enforce the one idea that it is folly to undertake a serious business (here, becoming a disciple of Christ), without counting the cost.”

Verses 31-32

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 28) pointed out that Herod had divorced his first wife, the daughter of a powerful Arabian prince, in order to marry Herodias, which precipitated a war between them. “The results were disastrous to Herod.”

A significant difference appears in the fact that the first of these two parables regards building, and this regards fighting, the same being two phases of the Christian life.

The Mighty One with whom the soul must be careful to make peace while there is time, is God.

Therefore, the second of the twin parables strongly suggests that while counting the cost of following Jesus Christ, the soul would do well also to count the cost of becoming Christ’s enemy! And what an overwhelming cost that is!

Let the man who will not follow Jesus consider that his refusal is a denial of the only hope of redemption.

Only Christ has provided the remedy for sin, stabbed the gloom of death with eternal light, planted the lilies of the resurrection upon the tomb, and arched every cemetery on earth with a rainbow of promise.

The parable had an application to Israel. Just as Herod was shamefully beaten by Aretus, Israel stood to be destroyed by Rome, unless they accepted the Savior.

Verse 33

Who is truly a disciple of Jesus?

Every soul that contemplates the terms of discipleship as outlined here must fall upon his knees and say, “Lord, I am a disciple; help me to be a disciple.” The Lord will help all who truly desire to be His followers.

Verses 34-35

Spence (ibid.) declared; “Here ‘salt’ stands for the spirit of self-sacrifice, self-renunciation. When in a man, or in a nation, or in a church, that salt is savorless, then that spirit is dead; and there is no hope remaining for the man, for the people, or the church.”

Anthony Lee Ash (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 63) wrote that: “Salt represented disciples who would count the cost and pay the price. Men who would not were as worthless as tasteless salt.”

This passage has no bearing whatever upon the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, or the impossibility of apostasy. Based upon the chemical fact that sodium chloride cannot lose its taste, that salt “(cannot) ever lose its peculiar pungency and power to hinder corruption,” George Bliss (An American Commentary on the NT, Luke, p. 239) concluded that “no true subject of regenerating grace ever has or ever will become utterly void of the new life.”

The illustration as here given by Christ posed no impossibility at all. “If even salt has become tasteless with what will it be seasoned?”

Jesus continued by saying, “It is useless for the soil or for the manure pile, it is thrown out.”

In the book of Matthew, Christians are viewed as the “salt of the earth,” here it is the spirit of renunciation and sacrifice within Christians which is the salt.

Strict and demanding as the conditions of true discipleship assuredly are, the rewards are abundantly sufficient to justify any and all sacrifices required in following the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 15

The theme of this chapter is “THE LOST.”

First there was the lost sheep (Verses 1-7), then the lost coin (Verses 8-10), and finally the two lost sons. (Verses 11-32)

It was the Savior who rescued the lost sheep, the church (under the figure of a woman) who sought the lost coin, and the Father who patiently awaited the return of the prodigal, reinstated him with honor, and then went out and entreated the older brother.

Since the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit the activity of the entire godhead appears here as engaged in the redemption of the lost.

There are four ways to become lost, and all of them are evident in this remarkable sermon.

The sheep was lost by wandering away from the flock. The coin was lost through no fault of its own, but through the inability or carelessness of the woman.

The prodigal was lost by overt and willful disobedience; and the elder brother was lost through pride, selfishness, and self-righteousness.

Verses 1-2

Jesus had already expounded the reasons for His moving “into the streets and lanes of the city” (14:21) to include the sinners and publicans as objects of the divine mercy; and, in this great chapter, the rationale behind His holy actions was revealed.

Even a single sheep, or a single coin, was something of eternal value in the eyes of the Father. God loves every person.

“This man receives sinners . . .” His enemies spoke in these words the Master’s highest praise. Intended by them as a slander, the words have been treasured by the church of all ages as glorious and eternal truth.

“And eats with them . . .” The attitude of those self-righteous leaders of the people who held themselves to be so far above the common classes of sinners was in itself the worst of sins, and Jesus made it the climax of this sermon on the lost.

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

Verses 3-7

The man with a hundred sheep is Christ the Good shepherd.

The sheep which wandered away is the backsliders from the faith.

Finding the lost sheep is Christ saving sinners.

Putting it on His shoulders is uplifting the fallen.

The rejoicing of the shepherd is the joy in heaven over the saved.

The fact of having been only a single sheep is not an indication of how few are lost, but of the Lord’s concern even for a single lost person. The lost sheep stands for countless millions of people.

- I. This parable may be viewed, first of all, as an argument. Jesus was being criticized by the Pharisees for associating with sinners; and Christ here showed that any of them would leave the ninety and nine sheep safe in the fold and go seeking for a single lost sheep, thus demonstrating that they valued an animal more than they valued a man.
- II. The parable also has utility (something useful) as a warning. The lost sheep, separated from the flock and from the shepherd, is a warning of the state of any child of God who wanders away from the church and away from the Shepherd.

Sheep as used by Jesus, always meant followers of God, goats being the designation for the sinful and rebellious. Therefore, the lost sheep here is a type of the backsliding Christian.

But notice the following facts about a lost sheep:

- A. It is absolutely defenseless, not even having the gift of swiftness in flight from danger, it's very cries being but the signal for the closing in on its enemies. Let the backslider behold here his danger and helplessness.
- B. The lost sheep is without any sense of direction. A carrier pigeon would find its way home, and a dog might do so; but a sheep never!
- C. The lost sheep is surrounded by dangers. There are beasts of prey, poisonous shrubs and weeds, and even the elemental forces of nature are hostile to a lost sheep.

Manifold and insurmountable are the dangers confronting the lost sheep; and it is no less true of the Christian who has forsaken the flock and the shepherd.

- III. This parable may be looked upon as an outline of the work God expects of His church, the Good Shepherd appearing here as the example to be followed by every Christian.
 - A. The shepherd's emotions were aroused with reference to the lost. He did not merely say, "Oh well, I still have ninety and nine left!"

It should be the work of every Christian to become aroused over the fate of the lost brethren. It is a brother who is lost, a man made in God's own image; to despise him, or to set him at naught, is to despise oneself.

B. The shepherd went himself; he did not merely send another.

Men are wrong who suppose that they may merely send their minister or an elder to seek out the lost. God has commanded: "You who are spiritual restore such a one." (Galatians 6:1)

C. The shepherd stayed with the search till it was successfully concluded. The search can have only one desire, that of finding and recovering the lost; not till then did the shepherd give up the search.

IV. This parable is also an epitome of salvation.

A. Just as the shepherd left the fold and the ninety and nine to seek the lost sheep, Christ left heaven with its glory to seek the lost of humanity. (John 3:16)

B. It will be noted that there was no safety for the lone sheep. Its safety was in the flock and with the shepherd. There is safety for the Christian only in the church and with the Good Shepherd.

"The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved," and He never stopped doing so. (Acts 2:47)

C. Just as the lost sheep was elevated to the shoulders of the shepherd, so the lost soul is elevated to new heights of eminence and rejoicing in Christ Jesus. "He shall exalt you" (James 4:10) is the promise to Christians; and just as the sheep found rest on the shoulders of the shepherd men find rest in Christ. (Matthew 11:29-30)

D. Heaven itself is concerned with the salvation of the lost. "Joy in heaven!" is a pledge that the unseen creation is interested in the rescue of fallen man.

PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

Verses 8-10

The woman is the church of all ages.

The lost coin is the “dropout” from the church.

The lighted lamp is the word of God.

The broom is the church’s concern for true virtues and morality.

The diligent search is the church’s urgent activity to save souls.

The rejoicing is the joy in heaven over one who is saved.

“Loses one coin . . .” This is a significant acceptance of blame on the part of the woman for having lost the coin, which inherently is capable of losing itself. This stands for people in all ages who, in a sense, are lost from God’s service through sin or ineptitude within the church itself. Volume could be written in the things which churches do or leave undone, causing the loss of precious souls.

I. Note: The coin is the type of a man.

- A. Both are from the earth, silver being refined from earthly ore and man having been created of the dust of the earth. (Genesis 2:7)
- B. Both are valuable. Silver coins have been recognized as items of value, but sometimes men have been accounted as cheap in the eyes of their fellows. Historically, the rich and the powerful have often held human life as cheap indeed. (Matthew 10:29-30)
- C. Both may be exchanged for something else. Man may exchange himself for eternal life. (16:9) On the other hand, he may sell himself to do evil in God’s sight. (1 Kings 21:20) A man, like a coin, may be exchanged for something else.
- D. Both are stamped with the image of the maker, the coin with the likeness of the emperor, and man in the likeness of God who created him. (Genesis 1:27)

II. The lost coin is very like a sinner, or backslider.

- A. Both were lost through no fault of their own. The woman lost the coin, and all men are in a condition of loss and death through the sin of Adam. (Romans 5:14-15)

Note: We are using the term “lost” in this connection with regard to man’s mortal condition, and not as endorsing the speculation concerning original sin.

- B. The lost coin and the lost man are alike fallen. That the coin in the parable was upon a lower level is evident in the use of a broom; and the sinner too is said to be fallen.
- C. Both the lost coin and the lost man suffer increasing damage. The lost coin becomes tarnished, even chemically altered, losing eventually the superscription upon it; and likewise the lost man finds the image of God in his soul progressively effaced and tarnished by sin and shame.
- D. Both the lost coin and the lost man become increasingly difficult to recover. The longer each is lost the harder it is to find.

III. This parable also reveals valuable lessons on how to find the lost.

- A. First, the woman lighted a lamp; and the church would do well to follow that example. Without a lighted lamp, one would never find a lost coin in a dark place; and unless the church shall hold aloft the lighted lamp of the word of God, the lost shall not be recovered. The only light is the Bible.

Churches seek in vain to light up this world’s darkness by preaching human philosophies, legends, political convictions social schemes, or anything else other than the holy word revealed in the New Testament.

“Thy word is a lamp . . . and a light.” (Psalm 119:105)

- B. The woman searched diligently for the lost coin. The church should be diligent in the program of evangelization, the same being the church’s most urgent business.
- C. The woman used a broom to sweep the whole place.

Churches which have allowed the whole atmosphere within their fellowship to be polluted with unrebuked sin, open immorality, or any other defection from the path of duty should take a lesson from the broom. The church cannot be effective in the saving of souls until it has lighted the lamp and employed the broom.

IV. This parable stresses the joy of the angels of heaven over the salvation of the lost. Seeing that the angels of God are interested in the salvation of souls, how diligent all men ought to be in looking after the one thing needful namely, the soul's redemption.

Nor is the rejoicing over sinners saved restricted to the courts of heaven. The woman with her friends and neighbors rejoice; and so will the church which works to save men. The saving church is a happy church.

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Actually, this is the parable of two sons, the elder brother being no less lost than the prodigal son.

There are two applications of this parable. First, the prodigal son represents the Gentiles who rebelled against God and departed from the father's house. The elder brother represents the Jewish religious establishment who remained, nominally self-righteous, unfeeling, recipients of the father's mercy, having lost all contact with the father.

The older brother went to the servants, instead of to the father, with questions about the joyful celebration.

The love of God for both Jews and Gentiles is seen in the father's reception of both sons, his reinstatement of the prodigal, and his entreating of the older brother.

The second, and more general, application of the parable has regard to the men of every generation.

This parable is an unqualified tragedy, first to last despite the rejoicing over the return of the prodigal.

Everyone is precious in God's sight; God loves them; God offered His Son upon Calvary for their redemption; and one redeemed soul is valued above the world and everything in it. (Mark 8:36-38)

The prodigal son did not merit the honorable reinstatement he received of the father; nor did the hard-hearted elder brother deserve the father's entreaty at the end of it.

In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-6), both those workers who came in the eleventh hour and received the reward, and those who worked all day and complained against the householder, proved themselves to be without merit. The same situation is seen in the parable of two sons. (Matthew 21:28-32) Who would wish to have a son like either one of them?

Verses 11-12

Jewish law did not require the father to honor such a request.

As the younger son received one-third of the estate and the older brother two-thirds, after the custom of the times, the father simplified things by giving to both sons their inheritance.

Verse 13

The undisciplined life of the younger son quickly resulted in the waste, extravagance, and sinful living recounted here. This scene of irresponsible youth wasting the inheritance is repeated again and again in every generation, by countless thousands of people.

Verse 14

Such things as wars, disasters, pestilence, and famine were far away from the prodigal's thoughts; but, alas, the unforeseen disaster laid him low and reduced him to want.

Verse 15

This acceptance by the prodigal of such a despised, menial position in the establishment of one of the citizens of that country shows the extent of his reduction and want.

A Jewish princeling in a swine pen! What a disastrous development that was!

Verse 16

“The pods (husks) . . .” These were the pods of the carob bean, a coarse, locust-like bean with a sugar content, still used in the East for feeding swine.

The seeds of this bean are strangely uniform in size and weight, and they were used as the measure of a “carat” by gem merchants, the weight of one seed equaling one carat, that term being directly derived from “carob.” It was only the pod, or husk, of the bean which was edible, the seed being very hard and worthless as food.

“No one was giving anything to him . . .” Nothing disappears any more quickly than the friends who have drunk the liquor and helped waste the substance of a man like the prodigal. His plight was altogether pitiful.

Verse 17

The glory of this prodigal is that he told himself the truth. He simply faced up to the facts of his hunger, loneliness, and hopelessness. The “life” which he no doubt expected when he left home had turned into “death” for him.

Verses 18-19

A good resolution is the beginning of a better life; and all of the ultimate restoration of this prodigal turned upon this resolution and his prompt execution of it.

“I have sinned against heaven . . .” There is a great depth of perception in this.

Sin has a dreadful recoil against the sinner, being against himself, and also against his family, against society and against every good and beautiful thing on earth; but primarily sin is “against God.”

“How then can I do this great evil and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9)

Verses 20-21

The prodigal, “Ran and embraced him, and kissed him . . .” (his father). Will God run? Yes, God will run to save them who come to Him.

Note: The only one who came to meet the returning prodigal was his father.

Charles Hodge (Will God Run? (Dallas: Christian Publishing Company, 1965, p. 45) writes, "God did not save him because he repented, nor because he walked all the way back home, but for one reason, and get this, people.

He forgave him because he was His son! We are saved by grace, and don't you forget it!"

Verses 22-24

The prodigal never came out with the intended request to be made as one of his father's hired servants. It would appear that the father interrupted him before that part of his speech to the father could be made.

"The ring, the robe, the sandals . . ." All these were the signs of the sonship which the father restored to him, the signet ring, in particular, indicating that the father undertook to pay all his debts.

The new clothing and the status at the father's table are fitting emblems of the salvation which God bestows upon His returning children.

"And they began to be merry . . ." signifies the joy in God's house over the salvation of the lost.

THE CASE OF THE ELDER BROTHER

This is the climax of the parable.

Verse 25

The logical thing for the elder son to have done would have been to go at once to the father; but apparently something was missing from the rapport which he should have had with his father. He was living the life of a slave in the house of his father; and it is to be feared that many a child of God is doing the same thing.

Verses 26-27

"And he summoned one of his servants . . ." The elder son was closer to the servants than to his father; and although this is not an outright break with the father, it is a small incident that shows the broken fellowship.

The elder son had not maintained communication with the father.

In this, he became a type of Christian who, while attending to all of the outward duties of faith, nevertheless drifts away from the love of it.

The vital prayer line becomes neglected; the heart grows cold, indifferent, and proud; and at last, such a Christian becomes as must estranged from the heavenly Father as was this elder son from his father in the parable.

“Your brother has come . . .” The servant, of course, anticipated that the older son would welcome the good news; but such was not the case.

J. S. Lamar (New Testament Commentary Vol. II, Luke, p. 206) said, “The very kindness of the father to the returned prodigal was a wrong to him; for he was rightfully, so he thought, entitled to it all.”

Verse 28

The persons primarily in view, as represented by the elder son, were the scribes, Pharisees, and other religious leaders of Israel. It was their anger at the Lord’s inclusion of publicans and sinners as objects of heavenly grace which, in a large degree, motivated their hatred of Jesus.

The fierce religious pride and exclusiveness of the leaders were but the metastasis of the cancer of selfishness within them; and their attitude toward others was an inherent contradiction of the purpose of God, whose love of all men Jesus had come to proclaim.

The selfishness of the religious leaders manifested itself in their despising the Gentiles, but it did not stop there. Inherent in the nature of selfishness is the constant restriction and withdrawal flowing out of it.

The progression of selfishness in Israel’s leaders had, in the times of Jesus reached a level in which most of the chosen people themselves were also despised by their leaders. On one pretext or another, they hated everybody but themselves.

“Began entreating him . . .” This speaks to the tireless efforts of Jesus to persuade the Pharisees to believe in Him. All of the gospels are eloquent in detailing the constant preaching of Jesus to this very class.

Verse 29

The distorted views of the selfish soul are evident in this verse. The older brother had received the double portion of the divided estate; and he was in fact the owner of the whole estate, therefore it was his duty to have given to the father, not the other way around. If this elder brother had wanted to share a banquet with his friends, it was surely within his power to have done so.

But as a matter of obvious fact, he did not wish to share anything with anybody, even resenting the slaughter of the fatted calf for the return of his brother.

Verse 30

Selfishness always alleges unworthiness against those who should have been the beneficiaries of charity. The big point in the older brother's mind had nothing to do with a brother rescued, but with the relative value of a kid vs. that of the fatted calf!

Verse 31

At the time Jesus spoke this parable, the issue of whether or not the Pharisees would give up their selfishness and enter, with the Gentiles, into the banquet prepared for all in the house of the father, had not yet been determined; and fittingly, the parable closed with the elder son still outside, and the father still entreating.

The dramatic scene is one of impending tragedy; for, in the last resolution of the problem, the elder son remained outside the house of joy and feasting.

Verse 32

“This brother . . .” In these words, the father brought the elder son back to the basic fact of his oneness with his brother, a unity denied by the contemptuous “this brother of yours” as the elder brother called him. All men are inherently sinful and unworthy of God's blessings; and there is no greater sin than the self-righteousness which denies such a truth.

This marvelous story teaches eternal truth, including:

1. The fact that God is willing to forgive prodigals and self-righteous bigots alike, providing only that they will receive His mercies and enter the feast of the kingdom.
2. It is easier to confess God than to many a man.
3. The great joys of God's kingdom are those of new life in those once dead to sin, and the finding of that which was lost.

William Barclay (The Gospel of Luke, p. 213), said, "It should never have been called the parable of the prodigal son, for the son is not the hero . . . it should be called the parable of the loving father, for it tells us rather about a Father's love than a son's sin."

"When he came to his senses . . ." verse 17. Jesus believed that so long as a man was away from God, and against God, he was not truly himself; he was only truly himself when he was on the way home." (Ibid., p. 212)

CHAPTER 16

Jesus continues His discourse to the disciples in the presence of the public and the Pharisees.

The great parables of the unjust steward (Verses 1-13) and the rich man and Lazarus (Verses 19-31) are both related to the conflict with the Pharisees; but the connective teaching between them was abbreviated by the sacred author. However, the positive connection is still clearly discernible (Verses 14-18).

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

Verse 1

"He was also saying to His disciples . . ." The unjust steward represents the religious leaders of Israel. The parable was spoken "to" the disciples, but "about" the Pharisees.

"The rich man represents God," and among all classes of men in that ancient world, only the hierarchy of Israel would qualify as stewards of God's house. To them were committed the oracles of God (Romans 3:2); they alone sat 'in Moses'

seat (Matthew 23:2); and they only were custodial heirs of the religious economy of Israel.

“A certain rich man . . .,” stands for God. Only God has the power over men to dismiss them from life and custodianship of heavenly gifts, the very things clearly typified by the prerogatives enjoyed by this unjust steward.

When it is clearly understood why the steward was commended, all difficulties disappear. In another parable, an unjust judge bore an analogy to the heavenly Father (Luke 18:1-6); and Christ Himself likened His second coming to the “thief.” (Matthew 24:43)

“Him as squandering his possessions . . .” Richard C. Trench (Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, p. 435) wrote, “All attempts to explain away the dishonesty (of this steward) are hopeless.”

His own behavior in context was a positive admission of guilt on his part.

Verse 2

“What is this I hear . . .? The accusers of the religious hierarchy were the prophets of God, such as Ezekiel and Malachi, and finally Christ Himself.

“Give an account . . .” Here is the positive indication that the rich man is a figure of Almighty God. He is the one who summons men to give an account of their earthly lives and possessions.

Verse 3

“Said to himself . . .” This was the first commendable thing the steward did. Like the prodigal who also said “to himself” that he would arise and go to the Father, this man faced bitter, unwelcome truth about himself.

He lied to the Lord and to the debtors, but he told himself the truth. Many a hapless soul today simply does not have the courage to face unwelcome truth.

The lost soul will hardly admit it; the man on his deathbed speaks of what he will do when he gets well; and countless sinners tell themselves the falsehood that they are really all right, in no danger at all, or that they will turn and serve God at some future time.

This steward was no such character. He laid it on the line with himself. “I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg!” Nor did he question the fact that he faced eviction from office.

E. J. Tinsley (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 159 wrote), “The day of reckoning in view here is an analogy of God’s summons to Israel through Jesus Christ.”

Regarding the alternatives open to the steward, “J. B. Chapman once wrote an article on it, entitled, ‘Dig, Beg, or Steal.’” (Charles L. Childers, Beacon Bible Commentary, p. 562)

John Wesley (Notes on the NT, p. 264) wrote, “The steward had what men would call a ‘sense of humor!’ but by angels, ‘pride,’” as evidenced by his being ashamed to beg. Ashamed to beg, sure! Ashamed to steal? No!

Verse 4

His dishonest purpose was soon revealed. He would involve all the debtors in defrauding the lord, and then presume upon their charity when he needed it. Human gratitude for past favors is a broken reed indeed; and that is possibly the reason why the parable allows the presumption that he received it to stand, without regard to what might happen afterward.

Verses 5-7

The size of this operation is evident in the large amounts owed. The measure used here for oil and wheat were “the bath, which was about 9 gallons, and the cor, which was about 11 bushels.” J. R. Dummelow (Commentary of The Holy Bible, p. 759)

Thus the transaction mentioned involved some 900 gallons of olive oil and about 1100 bushels of wheat.

Ray Summers (Commentary of Luke, p. 190) wrote, “This was a business venture in which the steward helped several retailers cheat a wholesaler with whom they traded.

These amounts are much greater than would have been expected of mere tenants on the lord’s estate.

This lowering of the bills is the perfect analogy of the manner in which the scribes and Pharisees lowered the standards of righteousness as a device for keeping their hold upon the people.

They were allowing men to say, “It is a gift” (Matthew 15:5), allowing divorce on any pretext (Luke 16:18), and countless devices making void the law of God. (Matthew 23:16)

The scribes and Pharisees were the deceitful stewards in view here, the analogy may be extended throughout Christian history to include countless others who have marked down the gospel and perverted God’s law.

This crooked device of the unjust steward was known to Pharaoh who proposed to Moses that God’s command to go three days journey into the wilderness might be honored by going “not very far away” (Exodus 8:28). It is, of course, a device of Satan; and it is still being employed against the truth today.

Jesus Christ commanded faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ as preconditions of salvation; but the unjust steward still offers salvation to men for “faith only,” or “confession only.”

The worship of Jesus Christ is demanded of all who would be saved, in terms of a full hundred measures of oil, or of wheat. That worship requires that men sing, pray, study God’s word, give of their means to support the truth and faithfully observe the Lord’s Supper. And, despite this, there are great systems of “Christian” religions that reduce the requirements in various particulars.

It should be noted that the unjust steward moved with all possible dispatch and diligence to put his evil plan in operation. He acted then and there, not putting it off a single day.

“He called every one of his lord’s debtors.” None was skipped, or over looked. “Sit down quickly . . .” emphasizes the urgency of the steward’s plans and the speed with which they were prosecuted.

Thus it is clear enough that in quite a number of the most important qualities, that unjust steward was fully entitled to commendation, not for dishonesty, but for those qualities. And what were they?

1. He told himself the truth.
2. He took account of this own need which would not diminish merely because he had lost his job.
3. He accurately appraised the necessity to make some provision against that future need, even as Christ Himself commanded. (Revelation 3:18)
4. He used those things which he yet controlled in order to meet that inevitable need.
5. He acted at once with all possible speed.
6. He acted with brilliant sufficiency and thoroughness.

It is in these qualities that the steward provides an example of what all men should do with reference to the eternal needs of the soul; and, sadly enough, these are exactly the things that countless millions of men will not do with reference to those very needs.

Verse 8

Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 563) commented that “Christians often use less prudence in handling money than do men of the world,” while true enough, it is not the point here. It is the Christian’s imprudence in handling spiritual things which Jesus condemned.

The teaching is not that owls can see better than eagles, but that ‘owls see better than eagles, in the dark.’ (Richard C. Trench, op. cit., p. 439)

“His master praised the unjust steward.” Jesus, who was one with the Father in all things, commended this rogue, not for his dishonesty, but for his prudent handling of his worldly interests; and if Jesus had not intended this to be understood, there is no way to believe He would have spoken the parable in the first place.

Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott (Commentary on the Holy Bible, Matthew-Acts, p. 284) noted, “This unjust steward is to be an example, not in cheating his master . . . but as an example for our attention in spiritual things.”

Throughout the parable, Jesus unconditionally condemned in every action and every word, every suggestion of fraud and dishonesty, categorically calling this steward “unjust.”

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 416) said, “There was no danger that Jesus’ hearers would interpret His words as a recommendation of dishonest methods.”

Verse 9

“Mammon of unrighteousness . . .” This refers to wealth and all earthly treasures; but why is it called unrighteous? It would appear that they are in error who suppose, that the implication requires us to believe that wealth may not be accumulated except through dishonesty, fraud, etc.

While it is true that much wealth is thus acquired, there are countless instances of persons acquiring wealth innocently. All wealth of this world is unrighteous, however acquired; and by this the wealth itself, not the possessor, is meant.

1. Wealth deceives the owner into believing that it is his.
2. It strongly tempts him to trust in riches.
3. “In making a man depend on them for happiness, riches rob him of salvation and the glory of God.” (Adam Clarke, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. V, p. 462)
4. It estranges him from earthly friends.
5. It surrounds him with false friends.
6. Wealth promises much and delivers nothing.
7. It is a constant hazard to his spirituality.

The clear meaning here is that, “Mammon of unrighteousness does not mean wealth unrighteously acquired, but deceitful wealth.” (J. R. Dummelow, op. cit., p. 760)

“They may receive you . . .” The parable lays special stress on making the proper spiritual preparations prerequisite to being received into heaven.

Analogies in the Parable:

The rich man in absentia is the heavenly Father.

The unrighteous steward is the scribes and Pharisees.

The accusations are the protestations of the prophets and last of all, of Christ.

The day of accounting is the first advent of Christ.

The lowering of the bill is the corruption of God's law by the religious leaders.

The impending eviction of the steward is the impending removal of Israel as a chosen nation. The corruption of the debtors is the ruin of the vast majority of Israel by their leaders. The lord's commendation is a tribute to the persistence and ability of the evil leaders.

Note: The mystery of iniquity has always been an awesome wonder. When the apostle John saw the vision of the apostate church, He wondered with a great wonder. (Revelation 17:6) The true meaning being, "wondered with great admiration." It is the same wondering admiration which surfaces here. The steward's evil genius was so original, daring, and thoroughly crooked, yet serving his personal ends, that the lord in the parable, ignoring all loss to himself, commended the scoundrel.

If there was ever a class of religious leaders entitled to the same kind of praise, the Pharisees and their crowd were that class. The satanic achievement of that class in engineering the rejection of the Messiah sent from God was truly a marvel of adroit, deceit, and persistent energy.

Our Lord at once extended the analogies in the parable to encourage the same quality of skillful and persistent efforts on the part of all men who would attain spiritual values (though, of course, without the dishonesty and deceit).

"Friends . . ." The "friends" envisioned here are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the angels of God. These are the ones who will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

Verse 10

A man's faithfulness is measured by what he does with whatever amount of it there may be. People suppose that if they were rich they would give larger sums to charity, and who yet give nothing from their meager possessions, are deceiving themselves. What a man does with a little is a fair measure of what he will do with much.

Verse 11

Everyone is but a steward of God's gifts, even including life; and if he should misuse these which, in a sense, are only loaned to him, how would God give to him, as his very own possession, such a thing as eternal life?

Verse 12

This verse lays down, unqualifiedly, a law which makes the right use of one's possessions a condition of eternal life, for the giving unto a man of that "which is your own" can mean nothing if not eternal life.

Verse 13

This contrasts God and Mammon (personified) as deities between whom every soul must choose. Any attempt to serve both is actually the service of Mammon.

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 191) pointed out that here Luke used a word for "servant" which actually means "house servant."

This gives an equivalent meaning that "nobody can be a house boy in two different mansions at once!"

For the attention of some who always insist that a parable has only one point, it should be observed that Jesus made no less than four, basing them all upon this parable.

William Barclay (op. cit., pp. 216-217) summarizes these:

1. Children of this world are wiser than children of light. (Verse 8)
2. Material possessions should be used for cementing eternal friendships. (Verse 9)

3. A man's way of fulfilling a small task is proof of his fitness or not, for a larger task. (Verses 10-11)
4. No slave can serve two masters.

CONNECTIVE TEACHING

Verse 14

“Lovers of money . . .” Matthew 28:26 quotes Jesus Christ as saying that the cup and platter of the Pharisees was “full of hypocrisy and lawlessness,” the same being a total endorsement of what Luke said about the Pharisees here.

Luke's statement here, however, is the total picture of the Pharisees that emerges from the New Testament record. Their devious handling of money by application of the device of “*Corban*,” which Jesus so emphatically condemned, their making the temple itself a “den of thieves and robbers,” and their merciless exploitation of the poor, and their having more regard for an animal than for a human being—all of these things demonstrate the indisputable fact that Luke's simple declaration here, to the effect that this class were “lovers of money,” is in perfect harmony with all the word of God.

Frank L. Cox (According to Luke, p. 50) said, “No one scoffs at a scriptural lesson on giving but the lover of money.”

“Scoffing at him . . .” Anthony Lee Ash (Living Word Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 73) said, “The term ‘scoffing’ indicates to turn up the nose at a thing.”

Verse 15

The men Jesus addressed here “tended to connect earthly prosperity and goodness. Wealth is a sign that a man was a good man.” (William Barclay, op. cit., p. 218)

Mere material prosperity, unsanctified by spiritual motivation and a consciousness of stewardship under God, is here called an “abomination in the sight of God.”

Verse 16

Whatever is meant by “violently,” this must be viewed as improper and reprehensible on the part of those thus seeking to enter the kingdom.

J. W. McGarvey (*The Fourfold Gospel*, p. 283) said, “The gates of Christ’s kingdom were not opened till Pentecost (Act 2); but men, hearing it was about to be opened, sought to enter it prematurely, not by the gates which God would open, but by such breaches as they themselves sought to make in its walls.”

The type of violence with which men sought to force the kingdom is illustrated by the multitude’s action in trying to make Him king by force; and the Pharisees, particularly, thought the kingdom would be a secular restoration of the old Solomonic throne; and they were at that very moment trying to force Jesus to conform to their secular and materialistic views of the kingdom, all of which is indicated by their scoffing at Him.

Norval Geldenhuys (*op. cit.*, p. 422) also concurred in the view of McGarvey that the kingdom was not then established. He said: “although the kingdom was not yet come in final completeness it nevertheless came into the world as a mighty actuality, already in and with Jesus’ public appearances on earth.”

Verse 17

This statement of Jesus has in view the changing and perversion of God’s law by the Pharisees, who had perverted the moral requirements of it (as in the case of easy divorce, mentioned a moment later) in many ways, even seeking to change the nature of the kingdom God had promised to set up.

They wanted an earthly kingdom, a Messiah on a white horse who would throw out the Romans! Jesus here reminded them that not one of the tiniest provisions of God’s law would be waived in favor of their materialistic views.

“One stroke . . .” or as some versions of the Bible says, “Tittle,” meaning “little horn.” This was a small projection or hook that distinguished one Hebrew letter from another similar letter. (Everett F. Harrison, *Wycliffe Commentary*, p. 246)

Jesus was saying that even down to the smallest point, the law of God would be totally maintained.

Verse 18

Jesus' purpose in the introduction of this saying was clearly that of condemning Pharisaical perversion of God's law. This verse affords the most positive proof that one cannot ever know what Jesus taught unless he takes into account all that Jesus said.

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 423) spoke of the "absolute impossibility of basing detailed rules . . . upon isolated sayings of Christ."

One hardly enters the New Testament till the words of Jesus thunder from the sacred page: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

God gave His people four gospels; and in that gift is the certainty that one cannot understand the whole corpus of truth unless he shall take all of them into consideration.

J. C. Ryle (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Vol. Luke, ii, p. 211) caught the implication of Jesus' words in this verse, thus: "With all your boasted reverence for the law, you are yourselves breakers of it in the law of marriage. You have lowered the standard of the law of divorce."

William Barclay (op. cit., p. 219) said, "As an illustration of the law that never would pass away, Jesus took the law of chastity," (celibacy or virginity).

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Verse 19

"Certain rich man . . ." The Latin word for "rich man" is *Dives*.

"Clothed in purple . . ." Ancient craftsmen of Tyre discovered a process of making a very expensive and durable purple dye from the murex shell; and due to its cost, it could be afforded only by royalty and the very rich. From this, "royal purple" has entered into the vocabulary of all nations.

"Fine linen . . . gaily living." These are additional touches to show the extravagant luxury in which the rich man lived. It should be noted that there is no hint of any unrighteous acquisition of wealth, nor of any overt, sinful action against Lazarus, nor even any hint that he denied the crumbs desired by the

beggar. It is his total indifference to human suffering at his very gate which looms so ominously in the parable.

The element of Abraham presiding over Paradise forces one to seek an analogy. It is God, not Abraham, who has custody and control of the departed dead.

Verse 20

“Lazarus . . .” This is the only example of Jesus using a proper name to identify a character in one of his parables, and there must have been a good reason for this. There is quite possibly, in this, a prophecy of the resurrection of Lazarus. (John 11)

True, the Lazarus raised from the dead was presumably rich; this Lazarus was a beggar; but the use of a proper name for one who the rich man pleaded would be sent back from the dead to warn his brothers cannot fail of suggesting the fact that a Lazarus did rise from the dead, and true to the Lord’s prophecy here, the Pharisees did not believe, but instead plotted to kill him!

Verse 21

There is no word here that the rich man denied the small favor of the crumbs, their being in fact, no hint that he even knew Lazarus was there.

Verse 22

The two deaths are distinguished by the fact that the rich man had a funeral, whereas none was mentioned in the case of Lazarus.

All the rich man’s wealth earned him no exemption from the final accounting which comes to all men. True his friends might provide the pomp and circumstances by which the wealthy are usually accompanied to their tombs, but how vain and empty are such honors.

“The angels . . .” This ministry of angels for them that shall be heirs of eternal life is a big subject in the New Testament. One of the seven services provided by angels to mortals is in view here, that of bearing their souls, after death, to the abode of the blessed.

“Abraham’s bosom . . .” The Hadean world, as understood by the Jews, had two distinct places, one for the righteous and another for the wicked. Jesus’ use of

those ideas here endows them with utmost significance; for there can be no doubt that this parable was intended to shed light upon the intermediate state between death and the eternal judgment.

Verse 23

Here Jesus departed from the Jewish views which reckoned the diverse places of the just and the wicked as departed by only a hand-breath (a very short distance). "Afar off," as here, and "a great gulf fixed" (verse 26) show that the separation is extensive.

"Being in torment . . ." Basic teachings from this parable include the state of happiness for the righteous and the state of torment for the wicked.

There will be no time-lapse whatever between death and the entering of the soul into one or the other of the Hadean compartments.

The wicked life will not wait one second after death to begin reaping the rewards of unrighteousness; and yet, the eternal reward for both classes will not actually begin until the judgment.

Verse 24

"Father Abraham . . ." Here is found the absolute necessity for seeing this as a parable; for Abraham himself like all the saints in death, is in the place here called "Abraham's bosom." Abraham is therefore a type of God who presides over both Paradise and the place of the wicked in Hades.

This of course, negates any support that might be supposed in this connection for praying to departed saints.

John Wesley (op. cit., p. 267) said, "It cannot be denied but here in scripture is the precedent of praying for departed saints. But who is it that prays, and with what success? Will anyone who considers this be fond of copying after him?"

"Send Lazarus . . ." Ah, so the rich man did know Lazarus, after all, apparently even fancying that Lazarus was under some obligation to him, perhaps the crumbs!

"This flame . . ." Jesus invariably used fire in his reference to eternal punishment, and He did not depart from that pattern here. It is no comfort to

view this as merely a symbol of the real punishment; because what kind of punishment is that which would require so dreadful a symbol of it. J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 761) stated, "The rich man was not in hell (Gehenna), for no one is sent there till after the last judgement."

Verse 25

"Son . . ." The rich man had addressed Abraham as "Father," and here Abraham did not deny the fact of the rich man's being one of the patriarch's fleshly descendants.

This circumstance makes it easy to identify the class of men represented by the rich man. Who but the Pharisees were always proclaiming their rights as children of Abraham? Merely fleshly descent was exposed in this parable as having no value in the sight of God.

"Good things . . . evil things . . ." They are wrong who try to make this parable teach that mere wealth is sinful and mere poverty righteous.

Richard C. Trench (op. cit., p. 451) noted, "The rebuke of unbelief is the main intention of this parable; for if we conceive its primary purpose is to warn against the abuse of riches.

Then it will neither satisfactorily cohere with the discourse in which it is found, nor will it possess the unity of purpose, which so remarkably distinguishes the parables of our Lord."

The rich man was not punished for being wealthy, but for being devoid of all sense of humanity; nor was Lazarus rewarded for being poor. Although not elaborate, the true character of the beggar is implicit in the name Jesus gave him, which means "God help", an abbreviated form of "Eleazar."

Verse 26

The great teaching in view here is that death seals the soul's destiny. There will be no crossing from one side to another after death has closed life's day of opportunity. Such theologies as those related to the doctrine of "purgatory" are destroyed by the Savior's words in this verse.

Verses 27-28

The ingrained selfishness of the rich man first appeared in the request that Lazarus be sent to himself, a selfishness that might be overlooked in view of his misery; but, when all thought of his own improvement was denied, his selfishness was continued in this request that was concerned with nobody except his own kin.

There was an implied argument in this request, which was a way of asserting that he would never have come to such a place of torment, provided only that God had made proper provision to establish his faith, such as sending someone back from the dead!

Are not the Pharisees continually in view here? Were they not the ones always crying out for a sign? This rich man was one of their very own.

Verse 29

H. Leo Boles (Commentary on Luke, p. 319) said, "We have here one of the many testimonies of Jesus, including that of Abraham from the heavenly world, that the Old Testament Scriptures are the word of God."

This ties this whole parable and its teachings to Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees, due to their unwillingness to hear, believe, and obey the Law of Moses.

This shows that the opportunities of the rich man to know God's will were more than ample, there being no reason whatever why some sign should have been provided for him. The same is true of every man.

Verse 30

The rich man thoroughly understood why he was in torments, even if the commentators cannot seem to get it straight. It was because he would not repent!

Donald G. Miller (The Layman's Bible Commentary, p. 124) said, "The rich man's desire that his brothers repent indicates that he had discovered that he was not in hell because he was rich, but because he had failed to repent of self-lordship and place himself under the Lordship of God."

It was not what the rich man did that landed him in hell, but what he did not that landed him there.

Verse 31

“If someone rises from the dead . . .” Lazarus (another one) did indeed come back from the grave in the very presence of the Pharisees; but they did not repent. No! They set about to kill Lazarus.

Lazarus was the one Jesus had in mind here. Regarding his own resurrection, Jesus did not appear “to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God,” even to the apostles, “who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.” (Acts 10:41)

It would have done no good at all for the Lord to have appeared to the Pharisees.

This great parable teaches many things (Albert Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 118) listed these:

1. The souls of men do not die with their bodies.
2. The soul is conscious after death.
3. The righteous go to a place of happiness, the wicked to a place of misery.
4. We should not envy the rich.

Frank L. Cox (*op. cit.*, p. 51) listed these:

1. We should not live in luxury while Lazarus begs at our gate.
2. The selfish use of wealth will bring torment beyond the grave.
3. Memory will not be obliterated by death.
4. To prevent a great gulf from separating us from Lazarus in the hereafter, we should take care to see that the gulf is not there now.
5. If the ordinary means of grace cannot reach us, we need not expect the extraordinary.
6. He who is lost in death is lost eternally.
7. God’s word is sufficient to save men.

CHAPTER 17

In this chapter, the teaching of Jesus is continued by four definite pronouncements, which are perhaps highlights of an extensive discourse, the exact connection of which is difficult to discern (Verses 1-10, the healing of ten lepers (Verses 11-19), and teaching concerning the second coming of the Lord. (Verses 20-37).

Verse 1-2

This is the first of four sayings, held by many to be independent teachings of Jesus. They are unconnected with the discourse or circumstances in which Luke has placed them.

Jesus had just finished the parable of *Dives* and Lazarus which closed with the implication that Dives had influenced his five brothers to follow a sinful course, an error which he vainly sought to correct from the spirit world. Jesus quite logically moved to warn those yet living against such a sin.

Hershel H. Hobbs (*An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, p. 245) thought the four sayings might be entitled “Four things of which the Christian should beware.”

1. The sin of tempting others. (Verses 1-2)
2. The sin of an unforgiving spirit. (Verses 3-4)
3. The sin of overlooking the power of faith. (Verses 5-6)
4. The sin of supposing that one may merit salvation. (Verses 7-10)

The Pharisees, who were constantly on the fringe of every audience Jesus ever addressed, were at that very moment trying to cause the Twelve themselves to stumble; and Jesus spoke in the most stern manner against those who would pervert the faith of others.

“Stumbling blocks should come . . .” George R. Bliss (*An American Commentary*, p. 258) observed that the Greek word rendered stumbling “meant the trigger of a trap, contact with which would cause the trap to spring.”

This warning far exceeded anything that the Twelve might have needed. It is God's pronouncement of eternal wrath against those who lay a trap to destroy the faith of others.

"One of these little ones . . ." is a characteristic reference of Jesus to those who are "babes in Christ," whose faith is young and weak.

"Millstone . . ." The teaching here is that physical death is far more desirable than that which is reserved for those whose intent it is to destroy the faith of others. The millstone in view here weighted about forty pounds.

Verses 3-4

Jesus often taught on the subject of forgiveness. Just about the longest parable in the New Testament regards this very thing. (Matthew 18:20-35) Jesus is here giving a warning against withholding forgiveness when it has been asked for.

Ray Summers (Commentary on Luke, p. 197) was nearer the true meaning of Jesus when he wrote, it is foreign to the intent of Jesus to ask, "But what if he does not repent?" . . . The follower of Jesus is not justified in holding a spirit of unforgiveness just because no apology is offered. That would put the responsibility for the Christian's attitude upon the offender; and that Jesus would never do.

If one is going to forgive only those sinners against himself who repent and request it, he will not forgive anyone ten times in a lifetime!

Verse 5-6

This is the third of the four pronouncements. The apostles' reaction to the command of Jesus for what amounts to unlimited forgiveness appeared to them such a monstrous task that they supposed they needed a special measure of faith to be able to comply with it.

The teaching here is that the faith they had was more than enough to enable it, provided only that they got on with the doing of it.

"Apostles . . . Lord . . ." Jesus himself named the Twelve "apostles" (6:13); and they referred to Jesus as "Lord," using the word as a reference to godhead.

Drowning Peter cried out saying, "Lord, save me." (Matthew 14:30)

“If you had faith . . .” Jesus is saying to his apostles that if they had the faith like a mustard seed you could say to the mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and be planted in the sea and it would obey you.”

What did Jesus mean by this promise? There are two thoughts in that promise.

1. The forgiveness of those who sin against us, humanly speaking, an impossibility, comparable to the outlandish wonder in view here.
2. The faith of Christians without any providential increase of it, is more than enough to enable it to be done.

Donald G. Miller (The Layman’s Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 762) affirms that such a wonder as Jesus promised here suggests “that genuine faith can accomplish what experience, reason, and probability would deny, if it is exercised within God’s will.”

Verses 7-10

This remarkable parable is clearly a lesson designed to teach humility, obedience, and a sense of lacking any merit in the sight of God.

Jesus’ promise that they had the faith to move trees into the sea would naturally be tempted to pride or vainglory by such envisioned achievements. This parable was to show that no man can earn salvation.

Jesus said in John 15:15, “No longer do I call you slaves . . . but I have called you friends.” This verse presents Jesus and His followers in a much sterner aspect than in most of His teachings.

Paul did not hesitate to call himself the “bondservant” of Jesus (Romans 1:1); and this sterner aspect of the Christians relationship to the Lord needs to be stressed today.

Salvation is of grace. No man ever did or ever could earn God’s redeeming love.

Make no mistake about it, this is no promise that God will overlook the principle of obedience in them that hope to be saved. If one performing all that God commanded, if such a thing were possible, is saved by grace, as appears here, how utterly beyond redemption is that man who fancies that there is no requirement for him to obey.

Anthony Lee Ash (*The Gospel According to Luke*, p.78) summarized the teaching here thus, “Man can never repay God’s natural blessings, much less those bestowed by grace. The claim of love can never be fully discharged. Man cannot earn heaven.”

William J. Russell (op. cit., p. 182) said, “This rebukes the self-satisfied Christian who thinks that in obeying God he had done something especially meritorious.”

THE HEALING OF THE TEN LEPERS

Verse 11

A. T. Robertson (*Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 278) says, “John gives us three journeys: the Feast of the Tabernacles (7:2); the journey to raise Lazarus (11:17); and the final Passover (12:1). Luke likewise three times in this section speaks of Jesus going to Jerusalem. (9:51, 13:22, and 17:11) It would seem possible, even probable that these journeys correspond.

There was of course, one mighty, well-coordinated journey to Jerusalem during the last few months of Jesus’ ministry.

Three different times, Jesus interrupted the journey to go into the great religious capital of Israel on specific missions, each time returning to take up the final campaign as before. It is to that which this verse refers.

Between this and verse 10, Jesus had gone to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead, after which He withdrew for awhile to Ephraim in the hills north of Jerusalem, later going through Samaria and Galilee to resume that campaign trip to Jerusalem.

“Passing between Samaria and Galilee . . .” What Jesus did was to go through Samaria (first) and then through Galilee to the point where He took up the “journey.”

A. T. Robertson (*Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 278) wrote, “When the Passover was approaching, Jesus went from that region northward through Samaria.

- B. He traveled into the southern or southeastern part of Galilee, so as to fall in with the pilgrims going from Galilee through Perea to Jerusalem. We again combine Luke's account with that of John in easy agreement."

Verse 12

"Ten lepers . . ." The dreadful malady of leprosy was a terrible scourge of Mid-East cities in the times of Christ; and for that matter still is. The disease itself was considered a type of sin not necessarily related to specific sins of the victims. Their standing afar off was required by the Old Testament law. (Leviticus 13:45f)

Verse 13

Frank L. Cox (according to Luke, p. 52) said, "Think what their affliction had done for them!

- A. It brought them to a common level, causing them to forget racial hatred. Sin reduces men to a common level before God.
- B. It made them unclean.
- C. It isolated them.
- D. It made them hopeless."

Verse 14

Some were healed in one circumstance, some in others; most were healed instantaneously; one or two were healed in stages; some were touched by Jesus, others were not. Some were commanded to tell it, others forbidden to tell it; some upon the basis of their own faith, others upon the faith of friends. Some were healed in His presence, others in absentia; and, true to such diversity, there is a unique angle here, in that they were commanded to go show themselves to the priests (a necessary requirement of the Law, before they could be pronounced cured and reenter society); and they were healed on the way! No forger could have imagined a circumstance like this.

Verse 15

“Loud voice . . .” An almost total failure of the voice is one of the symptoms of leprosy. Richard C. Trench (op. cit., p. 360) remarked, “It is not for naught that we are told that he returned with a loud voice glorifying God.”

Verse 16

This gratitude of the Samaritan—Anthony Lee Ash (op. cit., p. 80) rightly understood as typical of “the future acceptance of the Christian mission by Gentiles.” The hardheartedness of Israel also appears in the ingratitude of the nine.

Verses 17-18

Sadness seems to have been the dominant emotion as Jesus contemplated the ingratitude of the nine. How could men be so thoughtless and unappreciative of God’s favors?

Why, it may be asked, did the nine not return?

One waited to see if the cure was real.

One waited to see if it would last.

One said he would see Jesus later.

One decided that he never had leprosy.

One said he would have gotten well anyway.

One gave glory to the priests.

One said, “O well, Jesus didn’t really do anything.”

One said, “Just any rabbi could have done it.”

One said, “I was already much improved.”

J. S. Lamar (The New Testament Commentary, p. 219) said, “How often does the love and life of the pardoned sinner, fail to respond to the grace that saved him!”

These lepers had come to Jesus in the extremity of a most loathsome and pitiful disease; they pleaded with Him to help, and He healed them, but nine of them never even said, "Thanks."

"Except this stranger . . ." Twice, the worship of the healed Samaritan was called "giving God the glory." (verse 15 and 18) It was Jesus whom he worshiped. (We must understand that Jesus is God in human form; worshiping Jesus is worshiping God.)

Verse 19

Ingratitude was punished and gratitude was rewarded. The nine received physical healing; the one received in addition the salvation of his soul.

Verses 20-21

"Questioned by the Pharisees . . ." Some have made it out that these were sincere questioners; but all of the evidence is against it.

Anthony Lee Ash (op. cit., p. 80) said, "Their question amounted to a request for a 'sign from heaven.' Ash also saw this as "a rejection of the 'sign' Jesus had already performed, and of what He had already said upon the subject."

The Pharisees might have been sincere; but the view here is that these old enemies of Jesus were yet up to their old tricks. The question was probably a mocking one, "When is this kingdom of God of which you say so much and of which you claim to be King, visibly to appear?"

"Not coming with signs . . ." means that the kingdom would not visibly appear at all. There would be no proclamation of a king, in the political sense, no definition of boundaries, no setting up of any kind of material state at all.

"The kingdom of God is within you . . ." Special attention is due this statement, because of the error that is associated with it in popular thought.

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 202) declared, "One thing only can be derived from this." Jesus' emphasis of the kingdom is internal and spiritual, not external and material.

The kingdom of God was not in the hearts of the Pharisees!

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., pp. 443-444) wrote, “The contention of some critics that the Savior by these words taught that the kingdom of God is merely an inner, spiritual condition in the human heart, must very definitely be rejected. Such a condition may qualify for entrance into the kingdom, but it is not itself the kingdom. It is not a state of mind, nor a disposition of men. The kingdom of God is a fact of history, not of psychology. Jesus speaks everywhere of men entering the kingdom, not of the kingdom entering men!”

Verse 21

“Look here it is, there it is . . .” In verses 22-37 Jesus will explain the external, visible “signs” so desired by the Pharisees. These visible “signs” were to be seen, not during the forthcoming church phase of the kingdom of God, but at the Second Advent. Verses 22-27, speak of The Second Coming of Jesus.

Verse 22

This verse is a reference to the present dispensation, during which Christians, oppressed by temptations and tribulations, will, like the Pharisees of old, desire to see just such cataclysmic events as they wanted to see, and which they erroneously understood would usher in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus shows here that those great physical, cataclysmic disorders and cosmic signs shall indeed come to pass at the Second Coming—but not now.

Like the martyred saints, Christians who find themselves a conscious, hated minority in society, reviled, and set at naught by a hostile secular world, will cry, “How long?” But the end is not yet. (Revelation 6:10)

Verses 23-24

The Second Coming of Christ will be an event that all men shall see and recognize instantly. Like a stroke of lightning at midnight, saints and sinners alike shall see it; and “all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, for they shall see the Son of Man.” (Matthew 24:30)

The Second Coming will be bad news for the vast majority of mankind; but it will not be the kind of news any man will be able to ignore.

Verse 25

The satanic insinuation that Jesus expected His glory in the final phase of the kingdom to come shortly to pass is here refuted. The Lord envisaged a time-lapse, measured not in years, but in generations. Jesus in this verse announced that a gloomy state of things would prevail on earth before His Second Coming.

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 90) said, “The torch of religious feeling will have waned in that unknown and possibly distant future when Messiah shall reappear, and will be burning with a pale, faint light. The bulk of mankind will be given up to sensuality. They will argue that the sun rose yesterday, and on many yesterdays, and of course it will rise again tomorrow, etc.”

Some have vainly supposed that Christianity, like some conquering army, will sweep over every land, capturing the whole world for Jesus, binding the world, and laying it in golden chains at the blessed Redeemer’s feet. Would to God it could be true.

Jesus however, did not look forward to any such results. “When He comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” (18:8)

The next few verses tell how it really will be.

Verses 26-29

The Dead Sea today lies on the site of the cities of the plain which were destroyed by the cataclysm mentioned here.

The ravages of the flood were genuine, world-wide, and attested not merely in the word of God, but by the legends of fabled Atlantis and many others. Moreover there is hardly a hill on earth that does not show signs of once having been beneath the sea.

The fact that Jesus selected these two great physical phenomena from the Old Testament, making them comparable to the Second Coming, is a clear word that the Second Coming will also be such a physical thing; a cataclysm of unbelievable and unprecedented destruction; and that in the midst of disaster, the Son of Man will appear to redeem the faithful from the earth, who will be caught up with the “Lord in the air.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) Men either believe this or they don’t.

The lesson here is not what happened to those generations, but what is going to happen to the world and the generation that abides when the Lord shall come.

Verse 30

Everett F. Harrison (Wycliffe Commentary, p. 249) pointed out that “Both in the case of Noah, and that of Lot, God’s people were taken away from the scene of judgment before it occurred.”

Paul indicated that the same will be the case with Christians when the final Disaster falls. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Other analogies which we are perhaps justified in drawing are:

1. Faith will virtually have ceased on earth.
2. Men will be busy in the same old ways, pursuing their same old interests.
3. Materialism will have won the minds of men.
4. The utmost security shall be felt by men.
5. All appeals regarding the worship of God shall be scoffed at.
6. The Second Coming shall be an instantaneous thing, like lightning.
7. It shall be world-wide occurring everywhere simultaneously, and therefore involving the totality of the earth and its enveloping atmosphere.
8. The Christians shall be caught up out of the “destructive fire” and shall suffer no harm from it.
9. Jesus and His holy angels shall deliver them; they shall ever be with the Lord.

Note: These analogies, some of which are in the text here, and some of which have been imported into it from the writings of Paul, are all nevertheless true.

Verses 31-32

Jesus used some of this teaching when He gave the combined answers regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world; but here it is their application to the latter event which is in view.

Verse 33

Men who run their lives as they please shall be lost. Those who submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ shall be saved.

Verses 34-36

“On that night . . .” contrasts with “in that day” (verse 31); and some of the ancient skeptics scoffed at the idea that Jesus’ coming could be both at night and in the daytime also. Present knowledge of the fact it is always night on part of the earth, and always day on the other part.

“One will be taken . . . the other will be left . . .” Which of these refers to the saved, which to the unsaved? From 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, it would appear that the saved are the ones who shall be “taken.”

Verse 37

This statement is difficult of understanding; and perhaps it was not intended to be otherwise. Even the word “eagles” is stoutly maintained by some to be “vultures,” and other scholars, as in the Revised Version, insist on translating it “eagles.”

“The body . . .” In all probability, this refers to the body of mankind, at last completely dead in sin, demanding by their sins and rebellion against God that the final judgment will be executed upon them; just as a dead body would draw the vultures, so humanity that is morally dead will inevitably draw the judgment of God upon them.

Anthony Lee Ash (op. cit., p. 84) wrote, “As surely as a carcass draws birds of prey, so sin would draw judgment and there would the Messiah be found.”

F. F. Bruce (Answers to Questions, p. 56) wrote, “Where there is a situation ripe for divine judgment, the executors of that judgment will unerringly find it out, just like vultures find the carrion.”

It should be remembered that Jesus was not here speaking of just any situation ripe for judgment, but of the final and terminal situation with the prosperity of Adam, when at last their day of grace expired, God shall make an end of all

human probation, summoning all men to the judgment of the Great White Throne.

CHAPTER 18

The content of this chapter deals with two parables on prayer, that of the unjust judge (Verses 1-8), that of the Pharisee and the publican (Verses 9-14), bringing children to Jesus (Verses 15-17), the account of the rich young ruler (Verses 18-30), another prophecy of His passion (Verses 31-34), and the healing of the blind man at Jericho (Verses 35-43).

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE

Verse 1

J. R. Dummelow (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 763) listed the lessons from this parable.

1. The duty of continual prayer.
2. The answer to prayer persisted in, is certain.
3. In the end, God will maintain the cause of His elect against their adversaries.
4. A warning against failure of faith in times of seeming abandonment by God.

“Telling them a parable . . .” This indicates that this is actually a continuation of the preceding discourse.

“Ought always to pray . . .” This has no reference to a ceaseless bending of the knee, or a continuation without intermission in the utterance of petitions to the Almighty, but to an attitude of unbroken fellowship with God.

Augustine said (quoted by Richard C. Trench— Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, p. 485), “There is another interior prayer without intermission, and that is the longing of thy heart.” It was to this that Paul referred, “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

“And not to lose heart . . .” Some versions say “and not to faint . . .” There is a remarkable analogy in this comparison of spiritual failure to physical fainting. Physically, men can faint from shock, disease, hunger, fear, etc.

Verse 2

Such a judge would have been one of those notorious magistrates appointed by either Herod or the Romans. William Barclay (*The Gospel of Luke*, p. 230) said, “Unless a plaintiff had money and influence to bribe his way to a verdict, he had no hope of ever getting his case settled.”

“Did not fear God . . . did not respect man. . .” These things go together. “He that has no regard for God can be expected to have none for man.” (Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament, Luke-John*, p. 126)

Verse 3

This was not a plea on the widow’s part for vengeance, but a plea for justice against an enemy who had wronged her.

“He said to himself . . .” One of the unique features of God’s word, is that it gives the truth of what men are saying inwardly.

“I fear not God . . . nor man . . .” This evil judge was boastful and arrogant in his infidelity and disregard of all considerations except those touching his selfishness.

“I will give her legal protection . . .” As Albert Barnes exclaimed, “How many actions are performed from the basest and lowest motives of selfishness that have the appearance of external propriety and even goodness.” (Ibid) A righteous deed, undertaken upon selfish and evil motives, cannot be well-pleasing to God.

“She wear me out . . .” This means literally, “Lest she give me a black eye.” A proverb known to all generations makes the destruction of one’s good reputation to be “giving him a black eye,” and it is clearly his reputation that concerned the judge, and not his bodily safety.

Verses 4-7

Jesus here contrasted the unrighteous judge's hearing the widow's plea with God's hearing the prayers of His elect. The unjust judge stands for God in this analogy.

No moral problem is involved in this, because Jesus frequently used such analogies, not only to show similarities but to point up the contrast also.

The concept of a suffering and persecuted church is also evident in these verses, making the parable a prophecy of the persecutions and tribulations that should come upon the church in ages to come, so remote a time as the Second Coming.

Verse 8

"Delay long over them . . . "This is a caution against expecting a sudden answer to all prayers, no matter how persistent. John Wesley (Notes on the New Testament, p. 271) said, "God does not immediately put an end, either to wrongs of the wicked or the sufferings of good men."

"Bring about justice . . ." The power and wrath of the eternal God are ever against those who persecute His people.

"Will He find faith on the earth . . .?" These words are variously understood, but there seems to be a definite foretelling of the decline of faith before the end.

Richard C. Trench (op. cit., p. 493) thought that: "We have other grounds for believing that the church, at that last moment, will be reduced to a little remnant; yet the point is here, not the faithful then will be few, but the faith even of the faithful will have almost failed."

John Wesley (op. cit., p. 271) said, "When Jesus shall appear, how few true believers will be found on earth."

J. S. Lamar (The New Testament Commentary, Vol II, p. 224) asked, "The Judge will be ready, but will the widow be there?"

The parable of the unjust judge was to teach persistence in prayer; but Jesus immediately gave another parable to show that something more than persistence is required for prayers to be answered.

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Verse 9

“Viewed others with contempt . . .” These people were not the careful observers of the outward forms and ceremonies of holy religion; but they are the gross sinners who “viewed others with contempt—those people who are striving to live as Christ commanded, styling them, “self-righteous bigots!”

In this parable, there is no indication whatever that the publican or the Pharisee (who viewed others with contempt) and those who seek the publican’s reward by “viewing others with contempt” were on very precarious ground.

It is so easy to set others at naught because “we are not self-righteous like them” as it is to set them at naught for gross sins.

Verse 10

The publicans were the tax-collectors, particularly odious to the Jews because they were willing agents of the Roman oppression; and besides that, many tax gatherers were dishonest. The very name “publican” passed into the popular vocabulary as a designation for one who was hated and despised.

Before noting specific words and phrases in this passage, the following discussion is presented.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN:

- I. The contrast between the two men in the Temple
 - A. The Pharisee belonged to the aristocracy of its time, a member of the ruling class to which he belonged. His good points are many.

He was not an adulterer, nor an extortioner, nor unjust. He had avoided the outward, gross sins into which many fall.

On the positive side, he was outwardly religious, as he should have been, keeping all the ceremonies of the law and paying tithes even beyond what the law required, and observing a hundred times as many fasts each year as God had commanded. He was superior to many of his own times, and also of our own times. His failure was a lack of humility, a proud and selfish arrogance having

developed within him that made him unsympathetic to others. Furthermore, he had fallen into the fatal error of supposing that he had placed God in his debt, that God owed him salvation on the basis of the good deeds that he did and his outward observance of the commandments in the law.

- B. The publican, on the other hand, was a social outcast, ashamed of the part he was playing in the oppression and humiliation of his own nation by the Romans, and pitifully aware of his neglect of all sacred duties.

His standing “afar off” shows that he did not consider himself worthy to stand near the lordly Pharisees, whom he no doubt considered to be a righteous man.

II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PRAYERS THEY OFFERED

- A. The prayer of the Pharisees was a monologue, acknowledging no need, seeking no blessing, confessing no lack, admitting no sin, and beseeching no mercy; it was as cold and formal as an icicle. It enumerated the virtues of the Pharisee and closed with an insult cast in the direction of the publican! It showed that he had a big eye on himself, a bad eye of the publican and no eye at all upon God! The prayer was actually with himself, presumably rising no higher than where he stood.
- B. The prayer of the publican on the other hand, was short, formal, and warm with the earnestness of a soul burdened with sin.

It confessed his sin, besought the Lord for mercy, and was attested by the sorrow and shame that smote his breast. This was one of few prayers Jesus ever commended.

III. THE CONTRAST IN THE RESULTS OF THESE PRAYERS

- A. The Pharisee failed to receive anything at all; after all, he had not requested anything. All of the pompous language of the Pharisee amounted to net nothing. His prayer was not merely useless and futile, but it was also an affront to God.
- B. The prayer of the publican resulted in his “justification.” This is a big word which shows that God had received him accounting him righteous to the extent this was possible under the law. He already enjoyed a covenant

relationship with God; and, therefore, it is an abuse of this passage to make this prayer of the publican a statement of what an alien sinner should do to be saved.

IV. LESSONS DRAWN FROM THESE CONTRASTS

- A. Humility is taught, a virtue which is so important that all of the goodness of the Pharisee could not save him without it, and all of the shame and unworthiness of the publican could not condemn him as long as he had it.

Men need eternally to be reminded that Jesus was born in a stable, not in a palace. His apostles were fishermen, not Pharisees. It was the common people who heard him, not the leaders; He preached not from a throne of gold or ivory, but from the hillside and a fisherman's boat; the central message of His gospel is for the poor and the lowly, not for the proud and worldly. The clarion call of the ages is that with which Jesus concluded the parable, "Every one that exalts himself shall be humbled; and he that humbled himself shall be exalted!"

- B. These teach the vanity and emptiness of self-righteousness. All men are sinners.

None are righteous (Romans 3:10); all have sinned (Romans 3:23); and all human righteousness is "as filthy rags." (Isaiah 64:6)

- C. These teach some vital facts but prayer. A short prayer is better than a long one. (Matthew 6:7-8; 23:14) Also, pray should be directed, not to ourselves, nor to the audience, but to God.

- D. These contrasts teach that only the humble are truly great. Earth's genuine heroes are its humble souls, walking in the fear of God, lifting up holy hands in prayer. Earth's selfish and pompous overlords, ever seeking the chief seats, ever walking in the livery of pride, and ever trimming their words and deeds to accommodate what they fancy to be the spirit of the age—such are not heroes at all, but are to be pitied. Like Shakespeare's "poor players," they strut and fret their hour upon the stage and then are heard no more.

On the contrary, the humble shall be exalted. "I will make them to come and bow down at your feet and to know that I have loved you." (Revelation 3:9)

Verses 11-12

The Pharisee stood and was praying to himself thanking God he was not like the other people.

“I fast twice a week . . .” God had commanded only one day of fasting each year, on the Day of Atonement; and the Pharisees had extended this to twice a week!

“I pay tithes of all that I get . . .” Tithes were not due from all gains, but only from the production of the fields and cattle.” (George R. Bliss, *op. cit.*, p. 269)

The Pharisees however, “even tithed what they bought.” (Donald G. Miller, *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*, p. 129). One can see the extent to which they had “improved” (in their view) upon God’s law.

Verse 13

“The tax-gatherer, standing some distance . . .” H. Leo Boles (*Commentary on Luke*, p. 343) noted that “Standing (in the case of the Pharisee) in the original, means that he struck a pose, or assumed an attitude where he could be seen.”

God be merciful . . .” This is one of only two places in the New Testament where this word “propitiation” or the verb “propitiate” is used, the other being Hebrews 2:17; and, according to Vine, it has the meaning here of “be propitious to or merciful to the person as the object of the verb.

The brevity of this prayer is astounding. Frank L. Cox (*According to Luke*, p. 55) said, “The Pharisee’s prayer is composed of thirty-five words, that of the Publican eight words (*Revised Version*). As a rule, the deeper the feelings, the fewer the words. We should have the attitude of the publican.”

Verse 14

“To his house justified . . .” is undoubtedly the verb spoken by Jesus which registered so indelibly in the mind of the apostle Paul whose writings found so much use for it.

“He who humbles himself . . .” Ray Summers (*Commentary on Luke*, p. 120) says, “There is something a bit terrifying about this parable. There is within every person that which makes it possible for him to do the same thing the Pharisee

did. He can go to the place of worship and go through the forms of worship and still go home the same person he was!”

BRINGING CHILDREN TO JESUS

Verse 15-17

Luke differs from Matthew only in the word he uses for children. (Charles L. Childress, *op. cit.*, p. 579) Ray Summers (*op. cit.*, p. 211) said, “The word here used for “babes” was used of “unborn and very young babes. Paul used it of Timothy who had received religious instruction from babyhood. (2 Timothy 3:15)

J. S. Lamar (*op. cit.*, p. 226) said, “There is no baptism here, and no hint of any and I think it is unfortunate that this beautiful and tender incident was ever transferred to the arena of controversy, especially as the lesson the Savior draws from it is of so different a character.”

Luke again resumes the narrative of two other episodes peculiar to himself, the story of Zacchaeus and the parable of the pounds.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Note: This incident has already been commented upon fully in both Matthew (19:16f) and Mark 10:17f).

Verse 18

Norval Geldenhuys (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p. 461) was right in declaring that: “Taken together (Matthew 19:16, and the verse before us) the complete question may have been: ‘Good Master, what good thing, etc. ...’ ” Jesus may have replied, ‘Why do you call me good and ask Me about good things?’ Thus the gospels supplement one another. It is unwarranted in such cases to speak of a contradiction between them.”

The great message of the gospels is perfect, complete, and overwhelming. The truly devout soul will be little inclined to heed the insinuations of that which make a business of finding fault with the Word.

Verse 19

Herschel H. Hobbs (An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, p.262) said, “No pupil ever addressed a rabbi as ‘good.’

So the young man paid Jesus the supreme compliment; but he called Him only a ‘teacher.’ Jesus reminded him that only God is called ‘good.’ By subtle suggestion Jesus was leading him to think of Him as deity, not simply a great man.”

Verse 20

Salvation was always, is now, and ever shall be dependent upon obedience to the commandments of God. Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 213) said, “Implicit in Jesus’ answer is the meaning that to obey these commandments is to have eternal life . . . This was good Jewish religious thinking.”

Human beings being utterly unable to keep God’s law perfectly, they must unite with Christ, being baptized into Christ; and as Christ, in Christ, they are total, perfect keepers of all God’s commandments. (Colossians 1:28)

Verses 21-22

“What do I lack?” That is the question that Jesus here answered.

Frank L. Cox (op. cit., p. 56) mentioned the “soul hunger” of this young man. “It was a case of youth asking for life, the rich seeking a treasure, hunger amidst plenty. Life was before him and wealth around him, yet he hungered.”

E. J. Tinsley (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 169) remarked, “In this particular instance, Jesus obviously thought discipleship must involve renunciation of possessions.”

The true explanation lies much more probably, however, in the fact that this young man was called to accompany Jesus and the Twelve, perhaps as some kind of an apostleship did require renunciation of possessions, a test that all of the Twelve met, as Peter mentioned a bit later.

At any rate, it would have been the height of folly for Jesus to have invited him to “follow” in that company without meeting the test they all had met and passed. The allegation that one cannot be a follower of Jesus Christ except on

condition of selling and distributing all of his earthly possessions is based particularly upon Jesus' words here; but it is impossible to sustain such a thesis.

Christ's word here was to this young man, and not to all; and the reason for this requirement in his case is easily discernable. In order to be an apostle, or to accompany Jesus, as this young man was invited to do; it was absolutely necessary to renounce all earthly possessions but such was never made a universal requirement of Christianity.

J. S. Lamer (op. cit., p. 229) said, "Our Savior, in all these wonderful lessons about worldly goods, means nothing tending to the disorganizing of society, or to the undervaluing of earthly riches, but to infuse a principle that shall uplift them to higher uses, and consecrate them to worthier objects."

Verse 23

In turning away from the Master, this young man not only made the wrong decision regarding his eternal state, but also with regard to his earthly state. He would have been far better off in this present world if he had obeyed Jesus. The whole Jewish nation was, within his lifetime, to go down to utter ruin and destruction, a calamity that no Christian suffered.

Verse 24

Abraham, Job, David, and most of the mighty patriarchs of Israel were men of very great wealth; yet Jesus affirmed that these shall be in the everlasting kingdom. (13:29)

The inspired evangelist Philip, and other distinguished persons in the New Testament church, were men of extensive means; and, therefore, what Jesus taught here is not the impossibility of a rich man's being saved, but the difficulty of it.

Verse 25

The sheer impossibility of a camel going through the eye of a needle forces the deduction that this is hyperbole, employed to stress the difficulty of a rich man's being saved.

Verse 26

Those who asked this rightly understood the impossibility of the camel going through the needle's eye. Jesus at once softened the remark.

Verse 27

Jesus would shortly show His disciples an example of a rich man entering the kingdom, in the instance of the tax-collector, Zacchaeus of Jericho. (19:1-10) Jesus did not require that Zacchaeus sell all that he had and distribute it to the poor.

Verses 28-30

Peter reminded Jesus of the sacrifices they had made to follow Him. Jesus honored Peter by answering him saying, "Who shall not receive many more times as much and in the age to come eternal life."

The Christian pilgrimage is a quest for everlasting life, a benefit that Jesus promised. Who but God could make such a promise? There is no way to reconcile such promises of Jesus with any conception of Him that fails to include His eternal power and godhead.

ANOTHER PREDICTION OF HIS PASSION

Verses 31-34

"All things which are written . . ." Some 333 prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Christ.

"That are written about the Son of Man . . ." Jesus kept the distinction ever in view that it was not the prophets who wrote the Holy Scriptures, but God who wrote them "through the prophets."

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 463) saw this passage as the "fourth" announcement of Jesus' Passion. "For the fourth time now the Savior announces that He will be delivered up to suffer and to die."

"This saying was hidden from them . . ." "It was not hidden in that Jesus did not want them to understand. It was hidden because of their reluctance to accept it." (Ray Summers, op. cit., p. 220)

HEALING THE BLIND MAN AT JERICHO

Verse 35

There were two villages called Jericho in New Testament times.

This incident took place between the villages, where, of course, a beggar would have stationed himself to take advantage of more traffic. Thus it was as Jesus was leaving one Jericho and as He “drew nigh” to entering the other that this incident takes place. (Everett F. Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 254.)

Verses 36-38

“Hearing a multitude going by . . .” This was a great throng of people on the way up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me . . .” The sad irony in view here is that this man who was physically blind had the spiritual perception to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. The Pharisees (a part of every audience, or crowd) had physical eyesight but could not see the Lord as the Messiah.

Verses 39

Our guess is that it was the Pharisees who objected to all that shouting which hailed Jesus as the long-expected Messiah.

There cannot fail to be an element of humor in this blind man shouting to high heaven that here indeed was the Messiah, and the lordly Pharisees trying to hush him up! There was no way that they could silence the blind man nor prevent the ages from hailing Christ as the Messiah.

Verses 40-42

“Your faith has made you well . . .” This means that Jesus gave salvation to this man as well as restoring his sight. They also recognized that only God could do such a thing, is implicit in the statement with which the paragraph closes. That the “people” followed—glorifying God.”

Verse 43

“Glorifying God . . .” is twice repeated in this single verse; it is clear that Luke intended to identify Jesus as one with Almighty God.

CHAPTER 19

In this chapter, we have the record of Jesus' announcement of Himself as the Messiah of Israel, the hope of all nations and the King of God's kingdom.

This first announcement was founded on the fact that restoring sight to the blind man was one of the prophetic signs of the Messianic age. (4:18; 7:21)

1. Jesus' calling of Zacchaeus, a prominent publican, as a "son of Abraham," stressed the religious rather than any political quality of his kingdom. (Verses 1-10)
2. He then gave a great parable (the pounds), identifying himself absolutely as the One receiving from God a kingdom, and affirming his intention of ruling that kingdom without regard to the opposition of enemies who would eventually perish at His command, and also including significant teaching for His own servants. (Verses 11-27)
3. He staged the triumphal entry the most dramatic proclamation of His kingship that could be imaged. (Verses 28-40)
4. His weeping over the Holy City proved His knowing in advance of His rejection and the consequences of that rejection to Jerusalem. (Verses 41-44)
5. The second cleansing of the temple was an open assertion of His right to rule in Israel. (Verses 45-46)

The chapter closes with Jesus teaching daily in the temple, the great masses hearing Him gladly, but with no full understanding of His mission, and with the chief priests and scribes setting in motion the apparatus for His murder. (Verse 47-48)

Verses 1-4

"Jericho . . ." This city is some 17 miles east north east of Jerusalem on the plain of the Jordan River. The old city (*Tell es Sultan*) is a mile northwest of *er-Riha* village (modern Jericho). Either location is properly called "Jericho." In the times of Jesus, Herod the Great (40/37 B.C.) and his successors built a winter palace

with ornamental gardens, near the famous palms and balsam groves that yielded lucrative revenues.

Jericho is situated 835 feet below sea level; and the 17 mile road to Jerusalem, which is 3800 feet above the Dead Sea level. The road that lay before Jesus was a steep one.

“Zacchaeus . . . chief tax-gatherer . . . rich” Zacchaeus was not a tax-collector, but a superintendent of tax collectors.

“Unable because of the crowd . . .” Zacchaeus’ small stature and the press of the crowd effectively shut off Zacchaeus’ view, so that he could not see Jesus; but there was something else that blocked his way. The Pharisees excluded all publicans. It could be that Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus’ calling the publican Matthew to the apostleship, or perhaps Jesus’ compliment paid to the penitent publican in that Parable of the Pharisee and the publican. These might have been stimulants prompting his curiosity to see the Savior.

“Climbed up a sycamore . . .” The sycamore tree is identified as the fig-mulberry, having a fig-like fruit and leaves like that of the mulberry. Such trees are strong, with great lateral branches, and are easily climbed.

That a man of this chief publican’s dignity would have resorted to such a maneuver suggests his foresight, energy, determination, and ingenuity.

Verses 5-6

“Said to him, Zacchaeus . . .” “The Lord knew not only the name of the man in the sycamore tree, but the state of his heart.” (J. C. Ryle, *op. cit.*, p. 295)

The incident before us, as well as that in Luke 22:10, make it absolutely certain that the gospel authors intended that we should understand that the gospel authors intended that we should understand that Jesus was omniscient.

Verse 7

The moment Jesus ran counter to their prejudices, all else was forgotten. That great multitude, clamoring for the kingdom of God to start, did not have the slightest conception of what God’s kingdom truly would be.

Verse 8

Scholars with reference to this verse are insisting that this refers to what Zacchaeus promised to do on that occasion and in the future, and others being equally certain that it refers to a rule of life that Zacchaeus had already long followed, the latter view being preferred here.

H. D, M. Spence (op. cit., p. 135) suggests the following. “The chief publican’s words do not refer to a future purpose, but they speak of a past rule of life which he had set for himself to follow, and probably had followed for a long period.

So Godet, who paraphrases thus, "He whom thou hast thought good to choose as thy host is not, as is alleged, a being unworthy of thy choice. Lo, publican that I am, it is no ill-gotten gain with which I entertain thee.”

“Salvation has come . . .” It was not his giving money that saved this man, it was his joyful reception of Jesus Christ into his home and heart.

Verses 9-10

Jesus’ singling out Zacchaeus as the only man with whom the Lord ever invited Himself to lodge, and the further compliment here to the effect that Zacchaeus was a “son of Abraham” identifies the chief tax-collector as a part of the true Israel of God.

Zacchaeus was a man of rugged honesty, piety, and devotion.

J. C. Ryle (op. cit., p. 297) expressed it, “Salvation comes to a house when the head and master of it is saved.”

“To seek and to save that which was lost . . .” Even so upright a person as the chief tax-collector, a true spiritual seed of Abraham, was nevertheless “lost” until he should be saved by the Lord of Life. All men are alike, lost in sin, and without any hope whatever, until they shall joyfully receive Jesus and love Him.

It was the great mission of the Redeemer to seek and save the lost; and that was to be done by the sacrifice of Himself upon Calvary; and there could be no other objective which would justify so great a sacrifice, except that of saving men from eternal damnation.

THE PARABLE OF THE POUND

Verse 11

The reasons why Jesus spoke this parable are suggested here.

Norval Geldenhuys (op, cit., p. 474) noted, “It was to teach that the kingdom of God will not take place immediately, that the kingdom will not bring with it a Jewish political triumph, that all of Jesus’ followers must work faithfully until He comes, and that the final judgment is the time when the faithful will be rewarded, and the unfaithful and hostile punished.”

Verses 12-27

This parable is unique, peculiar to Luke, and encompasses a wide spectrum of teaching far beyond that found in any other parable.

One portion of this parable (the detail of the ten servants and the ten pounds entrusted to them) does, in fact recall Matthew’s parable; but the lessons and analogies in view are utterly different.

Analogies in the Parable:

The nobleman is Jesus Christ our Lord.

His going into the far country is His ascension to God in heaven.

His receiving of a kingdom is reigning over the church.

His citizens refusing Him is secular Israel’s rejection.

The delegation they sent is “We have no king but Caesar.”

The ten servants is all of the servants of Christ.

“Trade you . . . till I come” is the faithful work of Christians.

The ten pounds is the trust God gives to every man.

The one who gained ten is the faithful Christian.

The one who gained five is the faithful Christian of less ability.

The one who hid his pound is the wicked and unfaithful Christian.

Ten cities and five cities are different kinds of employment in heaven.

Taking away the pound is punishment of unfaithful servants.

Slaying of his enemies is judgment of Jerusalem as a type of eternal punishment.

The return of the nobleman is the Second Coming of Christ. Extended absence of nobleman is the long period of time before Second coming.

“A certain nobleman . . .” This is an appropriate comparison for Jesus, who was of the royal seed of David, heir to the theocracy, and legitimate holder of the Davidic throne of Israel. William Barclay (op. cit., p. 246) said, “This parable is unique among the parables of Jesus, because it is the only parable whose story is based on an actual historical event.”

Many of Jesus’ hearers could no doubt remember the occasion, following the death of Herod the Great, when his son Archelaus made the long journey to Rome to have his son Archelaus confirmed by Augustus Caesar.

While Archelaus was on that journey, Josephus relates that the Jews “greatly complained of Archelaus, and desired that they might be made subject to Roman governors; but when Caesar had heard what they had to say, he distributed Herod’s dominions among his sons, according to his own pleasure.” (Josephus, Wars, Book II, chapter 6)

There is a clear reference, in this mention of a nobleman going into a far country to receive a kingdom, to the historical fact of Archelaus having done so, and with the additional fact of the Jew’s having sent messages to Caesar against him. The point left out of sight in the parable is also true that their delegation did no good; Archelaus reigned anyway!

So would Jesus Christ. The very place where Jesus spoke this parable was at Jericho, “Where this very Archelaus had built himself a royal palace of great magnificence.” (J. C. Ryle, op. cit., p. 303)

Charles L. Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary, p. 583) wrote, “Notice that the story is not about a nobleman who set up a kingdom, but who went into the far country to receive one.”

Jesus did not set up a kingdom while on earth; the kingdom began on Pentecost, after He received it in heaven. At the time Jesus spoke this, “The

crowning of Jesus is still to come.” (E. J. Tinsley, *The Gospel According to Luke*, p. 173)

“Citizens hated Him and sent a delegation . . .” Richard C. Trench (*Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, p. 508) wrote, “Before yet he had gone to receive His kingdom, the Jews cried to Pilate, ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ and again, ‘write not King of the Jews’” (John 19: 21). But the strictest fulfillment was in the demeanor of the Jews after His Ascension in their antagonism to Christ in His infant church.

“Ten servants . . .” The number “ten” stands for an infinitely greater number, such use of numbers being common among the Hebrews.

“His citizens . . .” mentioned in verse 14 were also His, and under obligations to acknowledge His rule; but the servants were especially “His” in the sense of being redeemed by Him. The citizens were His because he had created them and was their rightful lord.

“Ten pounds . . .” Each servant received the same trust, the pound standing for life with all of its emoluments. Literally “the pound” was a “mina” worth 100 drachmas (about \$20.00).

The three servants who reported are typical of all and the other seven were passed over for the sake of brevity.

“We do not want this man to reign over us . . .” Frank L. Cox (*According to Luke*, p.60) remarked, “Servants, what are you doing with the pound entrusted to your keeping? Citizens, we beg you to let this man reign over you, that you may reign with him.”

Of the unfavorable opinion of his lord, held by the man who hid his pound, it should be observed that the irreligious always have an antagonistic view of God. The king’s answering him out of his own mouth shows that men will not be able to complain if God condemns them.

“To everyone who has shall more be given . . .” This was a saying of Jesus, intrinsically true, and used on several occasions. Only those who employ their God-given abilities shall keep them and find them expanded.

“Bring them here, and slay them in My presence . . .” “This pictures the terrible fate of Jerusalem, indicating the inexorable judgments of God in history.” (Donald G. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 134) It also prefigures the Second coming and final judgment scene. The fact that the unfaithful servant was very deprived, contrasting with the capital punishment executed here, has led some to suppose that: “A distinction is drawn between the reproof of a servant and the execution of an enemy. The judgment of believers for reward and that of the opposing world for condemnation seem, to be distinguished here.” (Everett F. Harrison, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 256)

This bringing of his enemies and slaying them must not be understood as merely an inert matter in the parable. Richard C. Trench said, “It belongs to the innermost kernel of the parable.” Showing the unmitigated wrath of Almighty God as it shall finally be vindicated upon the wicked.

In this great parable, it is of the greatest significance that Jesus is the nobleman who went to receive a kingdom. Therefore, Jesus is Lord and King, and such this parable was designed to declare Him, no less than it was designed to show that no immediate political victory for the Jews would mark God’s kingdom. The arrogant assertion of many to the effect that Jesus fully expected a glorious kingdom at that point in history is refuted by the implications of this parable which envisages a time-lapse of centuries.

The very fact of Jesus prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem, as He undeniably did, an event forty years future from His crucifixion, and making that to be a type of the final judgment, as the overwhelming number of Bible scholars agree, show that the Holy Savior fully knew, and revealed it beforehand, that centuries were involved in the progress of His kingdom to the final judgment.

Verse 28

Verses 28-44 forms a transition from Luke’s central section (9:51-19:27) to the final events in Jerusalem.

Jesus will enter Jerusalem as King of Israel, knowing already that He would be rejected and crucified; and yet He would do so in such a manner that all ages would see and understand perfectly His purpose and intention.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Verses 29-30

Everything about the triumphal entry was carefully designed to stress the Kingship of Jesus.

“The mount that is called Olivet . . .” was the point from which Jesus started the entry; and why did He choose that place?

Zechariah prophesied that, “The Lord shall be king over all the earth.” (14:9) He also declared that, “In that day His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east!” (14:4)

“Bethpage and Bethany . . .” The latter of these was the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead only a few weeks previously. Bethany means “house of dates,” and Bethpage means “house of figs.”

“You shall find a colt tied . . .” Of course, the mother and colt were both tied, and both were taken for Jesus’ use. An unbroken colt would have been unusable by the disciples without the mother.

Genesis 49:11 was after Jacob’s prophecy of Shiloh (Jesus Christ). He specifically mentioned the binding of the donkey and the donkey’s colt, in connection with the washing of the Messiah’s clothes in “the blood of grapes,” a reference to His crucifixion.

Verses 31-34

It is clear that Luke intended his readers to conclude that Jesus possessed omniscience (all knowing), the event unfolding exactly as Jesus had said that it would. If Jesus had prearranged this, the owner who was standing there, would not have asked this question, “Why are you untying it?”

Verses 35-36

“They brought it to Jesus . . .” H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 139) said, “Matthew’s statement that the foal’s mother was brought to Jesus as well as the foal does not contradict Mark and Luke. Matthew’s account is probably intended to emphasize that Zechariah’s prophecy was literally fulfilled.”

“They were spreading their garments on the road . . .” This was commonly recognized as an act of homage to a king or other royal person.

Moreover, it must not be thought that there was anything unkingly about Jesus riding on a donkey. The donkey was always ridden by a king when going upon a mission of peace; in war, he rode a horse. The scene was one of unbelievable splendor and magnificence. The number of people was far greater than some have supposed. Some have written this off as “a rather small affair.” But there can be no doubt that incredibly large numbers of people participated.

Herschel H. Hobbs (op. cit., p. 278) tells us, “Thirty years after this particular Passover, a Roman governor required a count of the lambs slain at the Passover, and the “number was a quarter of a million.” Since one lamb was the requirement for every ten people, the total number who partook of the Passover was two and one-half million.

Jesus had only recently raised Lazarus; and John’s gospel recounts how the throng that surged around Jesus was dramatically increased by the countless thousands flowing out of Jerusalem to see Jesus who had raised Lazarus, and by the continuing flood of Passover pilgrims accompanying the Lord on His entry. The fearless Christ was truly the King.

William Barclay (op. cit., p.249) said, “It was a breath-taking thing to think of a man with a price on His head, deliberately riding into a city in such a way that every eye is fixed upon him. It is impossible to exaggerate the sheer courage of Jesus.”

Verses 37-38

Every action Jesus had taken in His entry journey had been taken with the purpose of precipitating just such an acclamation as this which greeted His coming into the Holy city.

“Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest . . .” There are traces in this of the angel’s announcement to the shepherds, the night Jesus was born. These words recall the event of the Nativity.

Verses 39-40

The Pharisees were complaining, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” Anthony Lee Ash (op. cit., p. 100) was surely correct in the opinion “this title (KING) ties this episode to the parable of the rejected king. (Verses 11-27)

“The stones will cry out . . .” Jesus evidently meant that such an event as God’s sending His only Son into this world would be duly attested, regardless of the objections of the priestly hypocrites.

Jesus’ reply to the Pharisees had the effect of saying, “Look, Pharisees, there is no way for you to hide what is taking place right now!” J. S. Lamar (op. cit., p. 238) said, “Years afterward, when the praises of Jerusalem were hushed in fire, and blood, and desolation, how eloquently did the silent stones in the streets proclaim His divinity!”

JESUS WEEPS OVER THE CITY

At a time when the most unprecedented outpouring of praise and acclamation was being voiced by the vast multitude, Jesus far from being enraptured and thrilled by such a demonstration, gave expression of His bitterest sorrow in an outburst of weeping.

Verses 41-44

“He saw the city . . .” A most extraordinary view of Jerusalem and the temple, would have been seen by any of the routes that Jesus might have taken from Bethany into the city.

“And wept . . .” Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 484) wrote, “The word does not mean merely that tears forced themselves up and fell down His face. It suggests rather the heaving of the bosom, and the sob and the cry of a soul in agony. We could have no stronger word than the word used here.”

And why did Jesus weep so bitterly in the very moment of what men would have hailed as His most magnificent hour? Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 588) wrote, “All this moved Jesus to tears. He saw something which others did not see. He saw the coming destruction of the city. He knew that all of His efforts to avert the tragedy had been repulsed and rejected.”

Even more, however, than the physical ruin of the city and the brutal slaughter of tens of thousands of her citizens, Jesus saw in His impending rejection by the people of Israel a second disaster, comparable in every way to the one in Eden.

If, and only *if*, the Jews had received the Son of God, hailed Him as Lord and Savior of mankind, and led the campaign for all nations to accept his authority, the subsequent centuries would have been times of unbelievable joy and happiness upon earth.

It was the incredible moral setback of the human race which was sustained in the rejection of the Savior which might have precipitated the bitter weeping on this occasion.

“Throw up a bank before you . . . surround you . . . level you to the ground . . .” This gospel was written before Paul’s death, long before Titus destroyed Jerusalem; and there simply cannot be any intelligent doubt that Jesus prophesied the very thing that happened.

Not a Christian was lost in the siege of Jerusalem. If Jesus did not predict it, how did that come about? This lament over Jerusalem is actually one of three. (Luke 13:34; Matthew 23:37; and here.)

THE SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

Verses 45-46

This was the second cleansing of the temple, the first having taken place quite early in His ministry; and there are significant differences. Here there is no order to “cease and desist,” as in the first.

It was too late; the day of grace was past. Also, the finality of “you have made it a robbers den” was not in the first. This cleansing of the temple, as was also the first, was a symbolical declaration of His Messiahship, and Kingship, on the part of Jesus. It was a fulfillment of Psalm 69:9 and Malachi 3:1-3.

Verses 47-48

Luke here summarized the situation as it existed on Monday of the final week. Only this day and the Tuesday following it remained for Jesus to continue His teachings.

The tragic events of the cross would begin to unfold on Wednesday, culminating in the crucifixion itself on Thursday.

“Sought to destroy him . . .” The glowering hatred of the leaders had reached the boiling point. They would kill Jesus by any means whatever, preferably by assassination. (Matthew 26:4) Whatever it would take to accomplish their purpose they were ready to act.

Their impatience, however, would have to wait upon the Lord. He, not they, would set in motion the forces that led to His death; and His consent, and not theirs was the condition required to be fulfilled before they could act.

The criminal and bloodthirsty leaders were reduced to frustration, as so vividly portrayed here. They could not find what they might do.

CHAPTER 20

In this chapter, which details Jesus’ teachings on Monday of the final week, there are the following units: The Pharisees questioned Jesus’ authority (Verses 1-8); He gave the parable of the wicked husbandman (Verses 9-18); He answered the question of tribute to Caesar (Verses 19-26); He exposed the question of the Sadducees regarding the resurrection (Verses 27-40); He confounded them with a question of His own (Verses 41-44); and He uttered a sharp condemnation and warning against the scribes. (Verses 45-47)

Note: This entire chapter is contained in the parallel accounts of both Matthew and Mark. To avoid needless repetition, the several units of this chapter are discussed in a more general manner.

The Pharisees questioned the authority of Jesus, their purpose no doubt being to embarrass the Lord.

They supposed that Jesus had no authority from them, and that they only could grant authority to the religious teachers, so they must have felt rather smug in propounding their question.

Verses 1-8

Their question was snide, as was evident in the malice and dishonesty of them that asked it; and yet, despite this the question itself is the most important that

any man may ask concerning the authority of Jesus. That question, “By what authority are You doing these things,” must be answered by every person hoping to enter into eternal life.

They demanded that Jesus, “Tell us,” But Jesus threw their hand grenade back into their own faces, saying, “TELL ME!” By such a shocking refusal of their rights to pass on the credentials of the Christ, the Lord exposed them before all people.

John the Baptist's authority was indeed from God. The chief priests, scribes and elders of Israel well knew this; for the mighty herald had unequivocally identified Jesus, thus:

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

He that baptizes in the Holy Spirit. (John 1:33)

He that has the bride is the bridegroom. (John 3:29)

He . . . comes is from above, is above all. (John 3:31)

He whom God hath sent speaks the words of God. (John 3:33)

God has given to the Son all things. (John 3:35)

He that believes on the Son has eternal life. (John 3:36)

He that obeys not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

The name John the Baptist must have struck fear and embarrassment into the hearts of Jesus' challengers. So great was the impact of Jesus' question that it appears they withdrew somewhat, and held a council among themselves on the answer they would give.

It quickly appeared that not Jesus, but they, were trapped. The best thing they could come up with was an open profession of ignorance, and that before multitudes!

PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

Verses 9-18

II. This great parable is the central member of a trilogy of magnificent parables, all three of which were spoken by Jesus to set forth the rebellious behavior of official Israel. The full trilogy is found only in Matthew 21:28-22:14.

This trilogy of parables is arranged in ascending order of power and dramatic effect. They are the Parable of Two Sons, the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, and the Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son.

Analogies in the parable are easily seen. God, the householder, let out His vineyard, which is the chosen people with their privileges and protection from the Father, to the husbandmen who are the leaders of Israel.

Such things as the planting of the vineyard, the hedge, the winepress, represent the establishment of Israel as the chosen people and such religious devices as the law and the temple.

The servants whom God sent to Israel to receive the fruits of His vineyard are the prophets of the Old Testament leading up to and including John the Baptist. Maltreatment of the servants represents Israel's rejection, abuse, and even murder of the prophets.

The householder's (God's) desire for the fruits in season was God's desire for true spiritual fruits from Israel, including especially, recognition on their part of the need of salvation.

The beloved Son in the parable is Jesus Christ. Their casting him forth and killing Him is prophesied in the hierarchy's crucifixion of Jesus without the camp of Israel. The fact of the Son's coming last of all shows the finality of God's revelation in Christ who is God's last word to man.

God's taking the vineyard away from the wicked husbandmen and giving it to others is the replacement of Israel with Gentiles in the main possession of the gospel.

The householder's going into another country for a long time stands for the absence of God, in a sense, during the long ages when Israel was left unpunished

for countless rebellions against God, in the period required for the bringing of Christ into the world.

“This is the heir, let us kill Him . . .” This parable shows very clearly that the leaders of Israel recognized Christ as the true heir of the throne of David, the head of the Theocracy, and as the promised Messiah. The only flaw in their identification of Christ was in this, that they failed to see that He was God come in the flesh.

“He will destroy these vine-growers . . .” is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. In the third member of the trilogy, this prophecy took the form of a king sending his armies, killing those murderers, and burning the city. (Matthew 22:7)

“The stone which the builders rejected . . .” By this, Christ referred to Himself. He is the chief cornerstone; the builders (those wicked leaders) rejected Him, but they are not through with Him; He will be head cornerstone of the New Covenant.

“Everyone who falls on that stone . . .” This means “All who stumble at the teaching of Christ.”

“On whomever it falls . . .” The imagery here appears to be from Daniel 2:24, 44, in which the little stone “cut without hands” smote the kingdoms of the world and ground them to powder. The Jews were still dreaming of the secular kingdom; and by such a word as this Jesus called their attention to what God would do to worldly kingdoms.

Jesus Himself is the little stone; and in the figure He warned the leaders that although they were planning to kill Him, there would come the time when He would fall upon them.

“Scatter him like dust . . .” The scattering of Israel is in this. Frequently that word appears in the New Testament, and not a few times it refers to God’s judgment and the scattering of the chosen people because of their rejection of Christ.

III. The theme of events being narrated in this chapter is that of the leaders of Israel seeking to “destroy” Christ.

In the question regarding authority, they had been completely frustrated. Likewise in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, it was finally quite obvious even to the wicked leaders, that Christ was speaking about them. They rallied and came back with a series of trick questions, hoping to procure some word from Jesus that they could use as a pretext for formal charges against Him. The most likely area for them to explore was the political issues of the day. This they did at once.

Verses 19-26

The purpose of the leaders was clearly stated by Luke in his paragraph. They planned to trip Jesus up with a dilemma. If Jesus said it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, He might have lost much of His popular following; and if the Pharisees could have turned the vast multitudes away from Christ, they could have killed Him without causing the uproar they feared.

On the other hand, if He said that it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, they were planning to prefer charges before the Roman governor against Him as a seditionist, that is, a man rebelling against lawful authority and forbidding the people to pay taxes.

The hypocrisy of the leaders is seen in the spies and their flattering approach to Jesus, but His omniscience is seen in the perfect understanding of His questioners and their wicked devices.

Kings and rulers in all ages, as well as all governments, held that the coinage of the realm was the property of the issuing authority. This is still true today in the United States of America.

Thus Christ's reaction to this trick question was:

- (1) to establish that Caesar's coinage was in circulation, which He did by inquiring for a coin;
- (2) then to point out that it could not be wrong to "give back" to Caesar that which was already his!

The powerful thrust of this is implicit in two words that surfaced in the confrontation. The Pharisees spoke of “paying” tribute; Jesus spoke of “giving back” what already belonged to the central authority!

(3) Next, He took a step forward from this and demanded that those hypocrites also, “give back” to God what was His, namely the temple which they had usurped and made a den of robbers, and themselves, created in the image of God should “give back” to God. The ages have not diminished the glory of this astounding answer.

IV. One is a little surprised at the Sadducees appearing in the cabal against the Lord; and the desperation of the Pharisee’s case is evident in their including those old enemies of theirs in the contest. This was due to the fact that the Sadducees were the stronger political party, holding most of the high offices, including that of high priest; and these were, in fact, the principal architects in the plot to kill Jesus.

Verses 27-40

The Sadducees’ question regarded a projection that was theoretically possible, but actually quite unlikely and ridiculous on the face of it. It is impossible to see how they considered this any greater problem than if two brothers had been involved in the marriage of one woman. Nevertheless, because, under the Levirate marriage required in Moses’ law, such a development was not possible, Jesus ignored the unlikelihood of it and answered it.

First, regarding marriage, such an institution will not be found in the eternal world. In this connection, one cannot help wondering about “marriage for eternity” as taught in Mormonism! Just as other fleshly act shall have been left behind, so marriage also will not exist in the next world.

Two worlds are clearly spoken of by Jesus in the passage. “This world” (verses 34) and “that world” (verse 35) are the designations Jesus used of the “here” and the “hereafter,” nor is there the slightest hint of anything unreal about the future world. The Lord spoke with full authority of conditions there; and His words should illuminate all who heed them.

“They are like angels . . .” The Sadducees had raised no question about angels, although, of course, as a matter of fact, they denied that any such beings existed. Jesus applied the stretchers to their brains in this department also. The Lord not only spoke of angels as actual beings, but He revealed that men shall be equal to angels in the hereafter.

“Sons of God . . . sons of the resurrection . . .” This use of the two expressions synonymously is a pledge of a resurrection for the sons of God. The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental of Christianity; and no faith is adequate which denies it.

“Even Moses . . .” taught the resurrection of the dead; and the ignorance of the Sadducees was the reason for their not believing. (Matthew 22:29) Christ at once cited an example of Moses’s teaching on the resurrection; and the incident referred to brings in focus. (Exodus 3:6)

Significantly, Jesus made the argument for the resurrection to turn upon a single verb, AM, and the tense of the verb at that! Such faith in the Scriptures on the part of Jesus should inspire His followers to trust the Bible.

It is also significant that Jesus applied these words, “I AM,” to Himself expressing an affirmation of His Godhead.

After such a devastating defeat at the hands of Jesus, the questioners withdrew, no more daring to ask any question of the Lord. However, Jesus would turn the tables and ask them a question.

V. Jesus Himself asks His questioners a question.

Verses 41-44

As seen from the parallels, this is an abbreviation of a very significant question which Jesus’ questioners were utterly unable to answer. Its importance merits some further study of it.

1. The question itself. This was simple enough. In Psalm 110:1, which Jesus quoted, David had referred to the coming Messiah as “My Lord,” and, despite this, the most widely received title of the Messiah, and one used

throughout Israel in those times, was that which entered into the first verse of the New Testament, “Jesus, the Son of David.”

This was the title used by the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the beggar at Jericho. Jesus, therefore, said to the religious leaders, “How can the Christ be BOTH the Lord of David and the Son of David at the same time?”

2. The true answer to the question. “As God,” Jesus is the Lord of David; and in the flesh, He is the Son of David. In God’s great promise of the Savior coming into the world, the GOD-MAN who would save o sin, it was mandatory that the prophecies reveal both natures of the Holy One.

It is this which led to the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus would be Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, etc.; and, at the same time, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. This dual nature of the promised Messiah the Jewish leaders never understood.

Their pride led them to dwell upon the more glorious qualifications of the Messiah revealed in prophecy and to rationalize the prophecies of Messiah’s sufferings, rejection, and death.

They even projected two Messiahs, one the Conquering Hero and the other the Suffering Priest. This misunderstanding of holy prophecy was the undoing of Israel’s leaders, for it led them to reject the Christ.

3. Jesus’ purpose in bringing up this question was apparently that of finding one last means of breaking through their unbelief; but they would not consent to learn anything from Him. Not knowing the answer to His question they nevertheless did not ask Him the meaning.
- VI. Jesus’ question which fingered the precise point of the leader’s ignorance was scorned by them as something they did not care to know; and in this their inherent evil was glaringly evident. There could be no divine accommodation with such willful and arrogant sinners. The Lord responded to their hard heartedness by giving the people a warning against them.

Verses 45-47

How trifling are the things men love. Honorable greetings in the markets of the world, seats at “the head table” at dinners, “the Amen Corner” in the churches, metals, titles, a ribbon, a red hat, or a white robe (surplice).

Looking across nineteen centuries, how insignificant do those special seats at the front of ancient synagogues appear! Yet it was for things like these that the priestly hierarchy of Israel bartered away their love for the Lord of Glory.

Nor were such embellishments of their vanity the only trouble with those leaders. With bold selfishness they “devoured widows’ houses.” Just how they did this is not known; but there may be a glimpse of this in the parable of the unrighteous judge, who for private reasons heard a widow’s plea; but left in the background is the impression that this instance of “justice” stood isolated in his conduct. Through their influences with such men, the Pharisees had many opportunities to pervert justice.

“Long prayers . . .” Capping the picture of Israel’s self-serving rulers is this detail of the “long prayers,” uttered on street corners or other public stands, full of hypocritical piety, is an affront to God and man alike.

CHAPTER 21

The first four verses detail Luke’s account of the widow and her two mites. The rest of chapter recounts Jesus’ Mount Olivet discourse regarding the destruction of the temple, the destruction of Jerusalem, the Second Coming of Christ, and the end of the world.

Note: “In this passage the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the age so blend that the features of each cannot be precisely determined. (Donald G. Miller, *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 18 (Luke), p. 145)

For an outline of the chapter, the following has been adopted from H. D. M. Spence (*Pulpit Commentary* Vol 16, Luke ii, p. 184).

1. The episode regarding the widow’s mites. (Verses 1-4)
2. Jesus’ prophecy of the temples destruction, and by inference, the destruction of Jerusalem. (Verses 5-6)

3. The disciples' request to know the sign and when. (Verse 7)
4. Apparent signs not to be mistaken for real. (Verses 8-19)
5. The true sign, with destruction to follow at once. (Verses 20-24)
6. Signs of the Second Coming and the End. (Verses 25-27)
7. Practical applications and warnings. (Verses 28-36)
8. Summary of Jesus' final actions before the Cross. (Verses 37-38)

THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES

This woman's sacrificial gift has been the inspiration for countless gifts in all ages since then.

Verse 1-4

"The treasury . . ." George R. Bliss (An American Commentary, Vol. II, Luke, p. 299) stated that "the exact position of the treasury is not certainly known."

Most scholars have located it in the Court of Women, in which were placed "thirteen boxes in the wall, for the reception of the alms of the people." (H. D. M. Spence, *op. cit.*, p. 182)

These were called "trumpets" because of the trumpet shape of the metal devices on top of the boxes, flaring out at the bottom and narrowing upward to a small opening at the top where the monies were deposited.

"Two small copper coins . . ." Some versions will say, "Two mites . . ." William Barclay (The Gospel of Luke, p. 26) describes this coin as a "*lepton*" which was the smallest of all coins; the name means "the thin one;" It was worth one-sixteenth of a penny. All she had in the world was two "*lepta*."

Alfred Plummer (The Gospel According to Luke, *in loco*) said, "According to Jewish law at the time, it was not permissible to cast in less than two gifts." Thus, the women's gift was the smallest gift possible!

"More than all of them . . ." Jesus commended this gift, making it larger in His sight than all of the other gifts combined, evidently basing such an evaluation upon the following:

- (1) it manifested trust in God, being all that she had;
- (2) it was given in harmony with God's laws, even to the point of the Pharisaical rule that it had to be plural (two); (3) it was sacrificial, there being nothing at all left.

If God still measures gifts by the rule of what the giver has left, many a handsome gift must appear deficient. Of course, we must believe that God does so evaluate all gifts to His kingdom.

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 183) observed that, "As far as we know, Jesus' comment upon the widow's alms was His last word of public teaching."

PROPHECY OF THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION

Verses 5-6

There cannot be imagined a more shocking statement of Jesus, as this must have been viewed by the apostles. Mark identified the ones speaking here as Peter, James, John, and Andrew.

To every Jew, the temple was the most sacred and beautiful thing ever seen on earth. Josephus (Book V, Chapter 5) described the snow-white stones of such great size, some of which were overlaid with pure gold. The magnificence of this structure required the labor of thousands of men from 20-19 B.C. to 64 A.D. to build it.

Although not completed till long after Jesus' words, it was nevertheless sufficiently built, even then, to justify what is said of it here. In addition to the fundamental structure, there were adornments of the most extravagant and expensive kind, given by people out of gratitude to God for various deliverances, or by such people as Herod for political considerations. Herod's gift was a golden vine with clusters larger than a man.

H. D. M. Spence (Ibid.) thought there might have been some kind of connection between Jesus' praise of the widow's gift and the apostles calling attention to the precious stones and adornments within the temple.

He thought there might have been an implication in their remarks that, "If only such gifts as you have just praised, had been made, never would that glorious

pile have been raised in the honor of the Eternal King!” Jesus’ mention of the stones that would be “thrown down,” however, focuses attention not on the adornments, but upon the foundations.

All three synoptics mention this prophecy that not a stone would be left intact in the temple; and this must rank as one of the greatest prophecies ever uttered among the sons of the earth.

There can be no quibbling about this prophecy. Jesus made it, much to the astonishment of His disciples, and against all probabilities that such a thing was even possible.

Why should every stone be moved especially in view of their size? The occasion for this was the gold plating, which, when the temple burned, ran down into the crevices; and the soldiers of Titus made a thorough search for the yellow metal.

Also, significantly, the temple was destroyed contrary to Titus’ orders. After the fire, however, Titus ordered the destruction to be completed. (Josephus Flavius, *Wars and Antiquities*, p. 831). Jesus had condemned the temple to destruction and not even the word of a man so powerful as Titus could stand against the word of Jesus.

The temple was the last link between God and the hardened Israel. Norval Geldenhuys (*Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, p. 524) said, “How gloriously God had revealed Himself there to His faithful worshipers!”

Isaiah was called to his prophetic work in the temple (Isaiah 6) and in the temple an angel of the Most High had appeared to Zachariah with the announcement of the birth of John. (Zachariah 1:11ff)

Verse 7

Jesus went far beyond answering the question recorded here. He did indeed give the sign that signaled the end of Jerusalem and the temple. (Verse 20) Geldenhuys (*Ibid.*, p. 523) noted, “So terrible, the Savior warns them, will be the judgments soon to burst over the people of Jerusalem, that the judgments upon the guilty city will be the foreshadowing of the Final Judgment at his Second Advent.”

Jesus clearly foresaw that the destruction of Jerusalem was not to occur for a whole generation.

The Lord carefully warned the Twelve not to be deceived by many developments that would only appear to be signs; but reiterated in Matthew, “The end is not yet.”

Verses 8-19 give the warnings against false signs that “the end is near.”

Verses 8-9

There were many historical fulfillments of the things mentioned here in the forty years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.

Such things as “wars and tumults,” however, were but the normal state of humanity; and even the earthquakes and natural disasters mentioned a moment later were all “par for the course,” as far as this world is concerned.

One thing that has occasioned some questioning among scholars is Jesus’ prophecy of the many false Christs who would come claiming to be, “I AM,” and that “the time (of the End) is at hand.”

Norval Geldenhuys (Ibid., p. 530) said, “As far as can be ascertained, there were no persons who represented themselves as Christ during the years between the Ascension and 70 A.D. . . . this refers to the last days just before His Second Advent.”

H. Leo Boles (Commentary of Luke, p. 394) mentioned that the whole country (during those years), “Was overrun with magicians, seducers, imposters, etc., who drew the people after them into the wilderness, promising signs and wonders.”

There was also a pretended prophet, an Egyptian. (Acts 21:38)

If there were indeed no such people claiming to be “Christ” during the interval, Geldenhuys is correct in referring the words to the times prior to the End; but it is rash to conclude that there were no such claimants to Messiahship, whether or not we may be able to identify them.

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 184) stated, “Many of these pretenders appeared during the lifetime of the apostles. Simon Magus was one (Acts 8). His rival Dositheus, and his disciple Meander were such. Many of these false Messiahs

appeared in the interval between the Ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem.”

In view of the prophecy of Jesus, and the known condition of the times, it would appear that the preponderance of evidence favors Spence’s view. By the very nature of this double prophecy, the same condition of false pretenders to Messiahship and deity will mark the approach of the final judgment.

It must be observed that our generation has already seen many such pretenders to divine honors.

Verses 10-11

The famines, pestilence, earthquakes, etc., were to be expected as invariable phenomena characteristic of all generations. Again, these are not the true signs of the end. They are in a sense normal. It is futile to cite historical examples, which are plentiful.

“Terrors and great signs from heaven . . .” Impressive as these most assuredly will be, nevertheless, these also are not the sign. As to what Jesus foretold here, one may only conjecture.

Certainly, Josephus has the most amazing catalog of wonders that preceded the fall of Jerusalem, such as a cow giving birth to a lamb, the appearance in the skies of legions of marching soldiers, etc.

Whatever was the cause of such things, and whatever was their nature, real or imaginary, they were certainly “terrors” to those who experienced them, thus vindicating Jesus’ prophecy.

Verse 12

The application of these verses through verse 19 are primarily to the twelve apostles, this being implicit in the fact of four apostles being named by Mark as precipitating this prophecy; and when Jesus said to them, “They shall lay their hands upon you, etc.,” there can hardly be any way to avoid the inference that the Twelve are meant. Of course, as throughout the discourse, it applies also to the times of the End.

“Synagogues . . . kings and governors . . .” Thus the persecuting power against the Twelve and the infant church would be doubly persecuted, by both Jews and Gentiles. The book of Acts, in its entirety, is an inspired comment on the prophecy here. These things all come to pass exactly as Jesus said.

Verses 13-15

The promise of inspiration for the occasion was never made to all Christians, nor was the recommendation that they should not meditate beforehand what they would say. The Twelve are clearly in view here.

“Give you utterance and wisdom . . .” These are symbolical words with the meaning that they would have the Spirit of God speaking through them. (Matthew 10:20)

Verses 16-18

John Wesley (Notes on the New Testament, p. 282) said, “Not a hair of your head shall perish” is a proverbial expression (meaning that you shall not perish)—that is, without the special providence of God.

It will not be before the time, nor without a full reward.

Ray Summers (Commentary on Luke, p. 257) declared that, “Verses 18-19 contain words of assurance which appear to be contradictory to what is contained in verse 16!”

Some of the Twelve, Jesus said, would be “put to death;” yet here He says, “not a hair of your head shall perish . . . you shall win your souls.”

Jesus’ teaching here is that, even though the Twelve are put to death, nevertheless, neither their soul nor their body (from mention of hair) shall perish! Some of the Twelve were put to death, but have they perished? No. They sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of (spiritual Israel). (Matthew 19:28)

William Barclay (op. cit., p. 270) had a beautiful understanding of this, thus: “Jesus spoke of a safety that overpasses the threats of earth. In the days of the 1914-1918 war, Rupert Brooke, out of his faith and his ideal, wrote these lines.

*War knows no power, Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavor;
Safe through all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.*

The man who walks with Christ may lose his life, but he can never lose his soul.

Verse 19

“By your perseverance you shall win your soul . . .” This verse is an admonition to patience. The apostles needed it; Jesus was here telling them that a whole generation would pass before even the first phase of this vast prophecy would begin to unfold, and that some of them would not live to see even the type enacted before men’s eyes, to say nothing of the anti-type.

THE SIGN AND WHAT SHALL FOLLOW IT

Verse 20

The sign was to be the encirclement of Jerusalem with hostile armies. This was a sign no one could miss; and when it came, they were to expect utter desolation of the city.

Note:

1. There is nothing in this passage that is not also in Matthew who mentioned the “armies” that would burn the city (Matthew 22:7), and the “desolation” that would follow (Matthew 24:15).

It is certain that Matthew thus quoted Jesus’ words which were spoken forty years prior to their fulfillment. The only word in this verse which is not in Matthew is “encompassed,” and such an encompassing is inherent, absolutely, in the fact of the king’s “armies” destroying those murderers and burning “their city.”

Verses 21-22

“Flee to the mountains . . .” History records that no Christian lost his life in the incredible devastation that overtook Jerusalem, the certainty that they did escape being the only authentication of Jesus’ prophecy that is necessary.

Eusebius, the ancient church historian, was thus quoted by Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 535) tells us that, "The Christians fled to Pella, a town in Trans-Jordan to the south of the Sea of Galilee. Pella was one of the Greek towns of the Decapolis. There the Christians remained free from the Roman warfare and Jewish persecution."

"All things which are written may be fulfilled . . ." The great chapter of Deuteronomy 28:15-68 is surely included in this. Almost no form of calamity which was visited upon the Jews during the Roman war was left unmentioned in this chapter.

"These are the days of vengeance . . ." At last, as Jesus said, "All of the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of 'Abel' to the very time Jesus spoke, was coming upon the doomed city." Their greatest sin of all was in rejecting God's Son; and the penalty of that last act of rebellion was summarily executed upon Israel in the total destruction of their city.

Verse 23

Anthony Lee Ash (The Gospel According to Luke, Luke, II, p. 115) observed, "(These) touches depict the horror of a nation scattered by God's wrath. (Deuteronomy 28:64) The siege would work particular hardship upon pregnant women and those with babies still nursing."

There is no way to entertain any reasonable doubt either

(1) that Jesus uttered this prophecy, or

(2) that it came to pass as He said. Here indeed was the prophet like unto Moses.

Verse 24

"Fall by the edge of the sword . . ." Josephus gives the names of the tribes and villages with the numbers put to death, arriving at the fantastic total of 1,100,000; and, as Josephus was a Jewish historian, his record must be received as the most reliable that has reached us concerning this disaster.

"Led captive into all the nations . . ." Titus alone deported some 97,000 at one time; and the scattering of Israel, as often promised by Jesus was most thoroughly

accomplished. “Trampled underfoot by the Gentiles . . .” means occupied by the Gentiles. They did not tread down the city during the siege, nor as they devastated it, but as they occupied it for more than nineteen centuries.

“The time of the Gentiles . . .” is here named as the period of time during which the Holy City would be subject to Gentile domination and it is far easier for Christians now to know what this meant than it was for the apostles who first heard it. The historical record of that period is spread upon the chronicles of nearly two millennia.

The proper understanding of “the time of the Gentiles:” must take into account the following:

1. The fact that nineteen hundred years were clearly a part of the period indicated that much time has already elapsed.
2. The fact that these words “are to be understood as the antithesis of the season of Jerusalem (19:44).” (George R. Bliss, *An American Commentary on the NT, Vol. II, Luke, p. 304*)

The Times of the Gentiles will be comparable to the times during which Jerusalem held the favored position.

3. The fact that the apostle Paul used a very similar term, “The fullness of the Gentiles,” and prophesied that Jewish hardening would continue until that period was concluded. In the light of the above considerations, the true meaning of “the times of the Gentiles” would appear to be as expressed by various writers.

Donald G. Miller (*op. cit.*, p.148) said, “The interval between the fall of Jerusalem and the End of the Age is called “the times of the Gentiles,” during which the gospel is announced to the Gentiles and the vineyard is given to others than the Jews. (20:16, 13:29-30)

J. S. Lamar (*The New Testament Commentary, Vol. II. p. 251*) said, “To the Jews God granted a time of privilege and gracious opportunity. Near the close of that time the Son of Man wept over Jerusalem, saying, “If they had known . . . in this day.” In like manner, the Gentile nations are now having their times, which in due course are to be fulfilled, as was the case with Jerusalem.”

Charles L. Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary, p. 591) said, “The times of the Gentiles may mean the Gentiles’ day of grace, that is, the church age.”

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 185) said, “The times of the Gentiles” signifies the whole period or epoch which must elapse between the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the beginning of the times of the end when the Lord will return. In other words, these denote the period during which they, the Gentiles, hold the Church of God in place of the Jews, deposing from that position of favor and honor.”

There is not much disagreement among commentators that the “times of the Gentiles” represents a very long period of time; but there are many radically divergent views on when those times will be terminated. For example, R. Dummelow (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 766) thought, “They would close “when Israel is converted.”

Albert Barnes (Notes on the New Testament, p. 143) mentioned some who believe they will end “in the millennium” or “when all the Gentiles are converted.” John Wesley (op. cit., p. 283) said, “These times shall terminate ‘in the full conversion of the Gentiles.’”

Everett F. Harrison (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 262) supposed they would close “with Israel’s future restoration to favor.” Note: This interpretation of this passage is rejected here.

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 536) said, “Christ nowhere implies that the, “times of the Gentiles” will be followed by Jewish dominion over the nations. The kingdom of this world is to give place to “the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” (Revelation 9:15)

The “times of the Gentiles” means the period when Gentiles are being saved; and there is a powerful inference in this text that, just as Israel finally rebelled completely against the Lord, so will the Gentiles, bringing on the time of the End.

Verses 25-28

The signs spoken of here refer to the Second Advent when Christ shall appear in glory, all of the dead who ever lived shall be raised to life, and the Judgment shall occur.

Just as the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem was something that all could “see” (the encompassing armies), so also the sign of the Second Advent shall be when they shall “see the Son of Man,” coming with power and glory.

“And then will they see . . .” The event spoken of is very remote in time; the Lord did not say, then shall “you” see. Of course, in a little different sense, “every eye shall see Him;” and no man shall “sleep through” such an event as this.

The certainty that great signs will appear, not their exact nature, is revealed here. Exactly what these will be will not be known until the final events begin. The things prophesied surely appear to be vast and cataclysmic disturbances in the physical universe. The sun’s light failed at the first Advent of Christ, and similar cosmic signs may be expected in the Second Advent.

William Barclay (op. cit., p. 272) gave us a good summary when he said, “The Christian conception of history is that it has a goal; and, at that goal, Jesus Christ will be Lord of all. That is all we know, and all we need to know.”

Verses 29-31

“And all the trees . . .” These words seem to have been added by Jesus to prevent the interpretation of this fig tree as Israel; but, of course, that is what some have done anyway, with the deduction that when Israel starts budding out (giving signs of conversion to Christ), the glorious kingdom is about to appear! This parable simply means that the progress, or lack of progress, of God’s will among men will be plainly evident in the actions of men themselves.

In our day, the trees are shooting out the leaves and branches all right; but what is indicated? Is it an increase in righteousness, or wickedness? The man who cannot answer has simply not looked. Jesus said, “Behold!”

“The kingdom of God . . .” as used here is apparently a reference to the “eternal kingdom” (2 Peter 1:11), which is the state of believers after the Judgment.

Verses 32-33

Throughout this discourse, Jesus was giving prophecies related to two future events:

(1) the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple, and (2) His Second Coming in glory; therefore, Jesus' use of the word "generation" in this passage requires it to be understood in two senses. It has a perfect application to both events when so understood.

"This generation," meaning the people then alive on earth, would not pass away before Jerusalem was destroyed some forty years afterward. "This generation," in the sense of the Jewish people, will not pass away before Christ comes in glory. There can be no reasonable objection to this use of a word in two somewhat different senses, for the word "Israel" is itself so written and understood by the inspired authors of the New Testament.

JESUS FORETOLD THE PASSING OF THE AGES BEFORE HIS RETURN

One of the most common errors among the sophisticated with regard to Jesus Christ is the notion that our Lord thought that His Second Coming was an event in the near future, with the result that the early church expected Christ to come in glory during their own lives.

It is true of course, that some of the early church did expect the speedy return of Christ in their own life; but that was not due to anything Jesus either did or taught, nor to anything the holy apostles preached or wrote. In fact the early church was guilty of the same sin of inattention to what Christ had emphatically taught that is today being committed by the people making the same mistake that some in the early church made. The chapter before us emphatically reveals that countless ages were to go by before the final coming of Christ in glory.

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 541) offers this summary of it:

"Jesus taught that even before the destruction of Jerusalem a considerable time would elapse (verse 12), and that thereafter again a considerable time, when one after another of the Gentile nations (plural) would in turn, rule over Jerusalem (verse 24); and only when the "times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled (verse 24) (obviously a long period), will the signs of verses 25ff come, and only after that His Second Advent."

Note: Jesus plainly taught that ages were to pass away before His second Coming.

(Matthew 24:14)

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world . . . then the end shall come.”

(Matthew 25:19)

“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came.”

(Mark 13:10)

“And this gospel must first be preached to all the nations.”

(Mark 14:9)

“Wherever this gospel is be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her.”

(Luke 12:45)

“If that slave says in his heart, my master will be a long time in coming . . .”

“Heaven and earth shall pass away . . .” “This is a positive declaration that an end, or termination, shall come to the earth and its environment. “My words will not pass away . . .” None but God could have such a certainty regarding His word; and the passing ages have only confirmed the superlative truth of this statement.

Twenty centuries have come and gone and evil men will spend half a lifetime trying to prove one little fragment of the gospels to be false, but such is a hopeless endeavor. The sun, moon, and stars will disappear more quickly than the word of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verses 34-36

“Be on guard . . .” means that men should give more attention to their own spiritual condition than to such questions as the apostles had just raised. The vital thing that concerns every person ever born is his relationship to God in Christ; and as that is the practical concern of greatest importance to Jesus concluded His teaching with this appeal for patient, godly living on the part of His followers.

“With dissipation (surfeiting) and drunkenness and the worries of life . . .” “The cares of this life” appear here as equally detrimental in some as gross sins are in others.

“Suddenly like a trap . . .” Jesus here stated that the Second Coming will come upon “all” that dwell on the face of “all the earth.” Thus, none shall expect Him at the time of His coming, which appears to give a negative answer to the question He propounded in (18:8).

“Keep on the alert . . . that you may have strength to escape . . .” In the ‘type’ of the final event, the Christians escaped the siege through heeding Jesus’ words; the admonition here is that if His disciples watch they shall escape the disasters accompanying the ‘anti-type.’ There is a reference to this escape in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

“To stand before the Son of Man . . .” These words foretell a glorious majesty pertaining to Jesus Christ in the final judgment. The disciples were either standing or sitting with Jesus when these words were uttered, and they found no discomfort whatever in His presence; but the scene is here transferred to the Great Court Session, “When the great and terrible day of the Lord has come and who shall be able to stand!” (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 6:17)

Verses 37-38

“Now during the day . . .” The fact that Jesus taught “every day” of that final week contradicts the near-unanimous opinions of scholars to the effect that “Wednesday and Thursday were spent in retirement.” (H. D. M. Spence, op. cit., p.187)

A. T. Robertson (A Harmony of the Gospels, pp. 189-190) says, “Jesus scheduled no word or event on Wednesday, and nothing on Thursday except the Last Supper.” Note: Some say he misunderstood that Jesus was crucified on Friday. They believe that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, April 6, A.D. 30, which they say is confirmed by modern computer studies of those early dates.

“Spent the night on the mount . . . called Olivet . . .” Adam Clarke was of the opinion that Jesus stayed each night in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, in Bethany, a village located on the nearby slopes of Mt. Olivet.

However, Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 593) noted, “The Greek word translated abode (or lodged) in this verse means literally to lodge in the open. Thus it seems that Jesus spent the nights in the open on the Mount of Olives.” It is also significant that Jesus apparently never spent a night in Jerusalem, except as a prisoner. God’s displeasure because of Jerusalem’s rebellion against Himself was never more evident than in such a fact as this.

“People would get up early in the morning . . .” This has a reference to the daily schedule of teachings followed by Jesus. This mention of the early hour shows that the days were very long working periods, filled to the utmost with teaching by the Master.

The last public teaching, as far as we know, had been completed when Jesus praised the widow’s two mites; and the prophetic discourse spoken from the slopes of Olivet had lifted the perspective all the way to final judgment.

Only the deed upon which everything else depended remained to be enacted, and that was the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord; and the inspired evangelist Luke’s final three chapters deal with that final act and consummation of Jesus’ redemptive mission on earth.

Like all the other gospels, Luke’s account is original, fresh, independent, historical, and totally in harmony with all the others. The gospel records from a composite description of the most important week ever lived upon this earth. In these records is unveiled God’s offering for human transgression, who is our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 22

The magnificent drama of our Lord’s Passion rapidly unfolds in this chapter.

The Passover came on (Verses 1-2); Judas bargained to betray the Savior (Verses 3-6); the Last Supper was eaten (Verses 7-23); the apostles disputed about rank (Verses 24-30); Peter’s denial was foretold (Verses 31-34); the changed condition of the apostles was announced (Verses 35-38); an angel strengthened the Lord in Gethsemane (Verses 39-46); Jesus was arrested (Verses 47-53); Peter denied Him (Verses 54-62); the Lord was mocked (Verses 63-65), He was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin (Verses 66-71).

Verse 1-2

“Feast of unleavened bread . . . the Passover . . .” H. Leo Boles (Commentary on Luke p. 411) said, “The Passover, as used here, means either the meal, the feast day, or the whole period of time. ‘Eat the Passover’ refers to the meal, as here, or to the whole period of celebration in John 18:28.”

“The feast of unleavened bread” was used in several senses: Charles L. Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary, Matthew, p. 233) wrote, “The Feast of Unleavened Bread was the day the Passover lamb was slain. According to Mosaic Law, this was called the Passover and was followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-6). But at this time the whole period was known by this name.”

Josephus says: “We keep a feast for eight days, which is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.”

S. MacLean Gilmour (Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. VIII, Luke, p. 373) referring to the latter seven days of the feast said, “The feast of unleavened bread began at sundown on Nisan 14 (which was) the beginning of the fifteenth day by Jewish reckoning, and lasted for a period of seven days (Leviticus 23:5-6). The Passover coincided only with its first day.

The Paschal lambs were slaughtered on the afternoon of Nisan 14, and the solemn meal itself was eaten during the evening that constituted the beginning of the fifteenth day.”

The following chronological arrangement of the events of this exceedingly important week is adapted from J. R. Dummelow (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 692) with the changes required by understanding the crucifixion to have been on the 14th of Nisan, the same day the Paschal lambs were slain, and the same day when the Passover meal was eaten after sundown (technically the fifteenth of Nisan), the fourteenth of Nisan having been a Thursday.

A. D. 30

Sabbath, Nisan 9th . . . Jesus arrived at Bethany (John 12:1), supper in the evening (John 12:2-8; Matthew 26:6-13).

Sunday, Nisan 10th . . . triumphal entry (Matthew 21:1), children's Hosannas, healings in temple (Matthew 21:14-16), return to Bethany (Matthew 21:17).

Monday, Nisan 11th . . . return from Bethany (Matthew 21:18), withering fig tree (Matthew 21:19), cleansing temple (Matthew 21:22, retires to Bethany (Mark 11:19), and the conspiracy of His enemies (Luke 19:47).

Tuesday, Nisan 12th . . . they find fig tree withered (Mark 11:20), His authority challenged, tribute to Caesar, brother's wife, first commandment of all, and "What do you think of Christ?" (Matthew chapters 21-22). Woes on Pharisees (Matthew chapter 23), Jesus in treasury, the widow's mite (Mark 12:41), visit of Greeks (John 12:20), final rejection (John 12:37), triple prophecy of fall of Jerusalem, Second Advent and final judgment (Matthew chapters 24-25), counsel of Caiaphas (Matthew 26:3).

Wednesday, Nisan 13th . . . in the afternoon preparations for the last supper (Matthew 26:17), that night (technically the 14th of Nisan), the last supper with the Twelve in the upper room (Matthew 26:20), the foot washing (John 13:2), the departure of Judas, farewell discourses, the true vine, comforter promised, intercessory prayer (John 13:31 through 17th chapter), Gethsemane and the one-hour agony (Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:37).

Thursday, Nisan 14th . . . midnight arrest (Matthew 26:47), before Annas (John 18:13), Peter's denials about 3:00 A.M. (John 18:27, before Caiaphas (John 18:24), before Sanhedrin about 4:00 A.M. (Matthew 27:1), sent to Pilate at 6:00 A.M. (Matthew 27:2, from Pilate to Herod, and back to Pilate (Luke 23:7, 11), delivered to be crucified (John 19:16), Jesus crucified at 9:00 A.M. (Mark 15:25), darkness from 12:00 to 3:00 P.M. (Matthew 27:50).

The Paschal lambs were being sacrificed at this hour (John 19:36). Jesus was buried about sundown. That night was the Jewish Passover meal, Jesus having eaten it by anticipation 24 hours earlier. Burial of Jesus (Matthew 27:57).

Friday, Nisan 15th . . . Jesus was in the tomb.

Saturday, Nisan 16th . . . Jesus was in tomb.

Sunday, Nisan 17th . . . Jesus rose from the dead.

Jesus' own promise that He would be in the heart of the earth "Three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40) could not have been fulfilled in its entirety except by His resurrection at sunset on Sunday, which would have given three full days and three full nights in the grave.

Jesus said He would rise "the third day," meaning that He would not be in the grave but two days. He was buried at sunset on Thursday and rose early on Sunday, the first day of the week.

"Seeking how they might put Him to death . . ." From Matthew 26:1-5, it is learned that they actually preferred to kill Him secretly, because of their fear of the people, as mentioned here. However, the treachery of Judas induced them to change their plans.

Verses 3-6

What may have triggered Judas' treachery was the rebuke administered to him by the Lord during the incident of the anointing in the house of Simon the leper. (Matthew 26:6ff)

With Judas on their side, as they supposed, the chief priests then thought that they would procure ample evidence to warrant a public trial and judicial execution. As it turned out, Judas returned the money in bitterness and remorse, refusing to have any further part with the religious leaders; but it was too late for them, as well as for Judas.

Verse 7

This day of unleavened bread was Nisan 13th; and the preparations here mentioned took place in the afternoon, just prior to the beginning of Nisan 14th at sunset.

Verse 8

It was not actually the Passover meal that Jesus ate, but a similar meal in anticipation of it. Jesus was on the cross when the Paschal lambs were slain, and in His tomb when Israel ate the Passover the following night. (John 18:28)

Verses 9-13

George R. Bliss (An American Commentary, Vol. II, Luke, p. 312) said, “There was a custom that the head of each family should bring water from a certain spring, which has to wet up the unleavened bread for the Passover. But this man was not head of the house; nor does it appear how, among the thousands that would be carrying water at the same time, that the incident could have served as a sign.”

If Bliss’s reckoning of this occasion of the last supper as the Passover should be allowed, then it would nullify, absolutely, the kind of sign Jesus mentioned, because tens of thousands would have been doing the same thing. Obviously, this was not the Passover evening. This leaves the alternative that a servant was carrying the pitcher of water in a certain direction at a certain time of the day, and that his master was one who honored the Teacher and would provide the guest-chamber. The answer to this is not some “secret signal,” set up by Jesus in advance, but the omniscience of the Lord.

Verses 14-16

“I shall never again eat it . . .” Norval Geldenhuys (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p. 557) wrote, “Brook and Burkitt (Journal of Theological studies, July, 1908, pp. 569ff have maintained, and others have oft repeated it since, that these words indicate that the Savior did not celebrate the Passover and only had a strong desire to do so.”

This was not the Passover; and the opinions of Brook and Burkitt were correct. Jesus here spoke of the Passover which would be eaten the following night at a time when He was in the tomb.

Verses 17-18

The cup here in view was not the cup of the Lord’s Supper, but the cup of the simulated Jewish Passover, being observed by Jesus’ disciples a day earlier than the stated time, but which Jesus did not observe. This understanding is clear from the following summary of the pattern for the Passover meal described by Farrar and cited by George R. Bliss (op. cit., pp. 313-314).

1. Each drank a cup of wine, “the cup of consecration,” followed by a blessing.
2. Hands were washed, a table carried in, on which were bitter herbs, unleavened bread, the Paschal lamb, dates and vinegar.
3. The father dipped a morsel of unleavened bread and bitter herbs, about the size of an olive (the sop), in the vinegar, giving it to each in turn.
4. The second cup of wine was poured, and the passover story was rehearsed.
5. The first part of a special song, the Hallel, was sung.
6. Grace was said and a benediction pronounced, after which the food, as in (3), was further distributed to all.
7. The Paschal lamb was eaten and a third cup of wine was had.
8. After another thanksgiving, a fourth cup, the cup of “joy” was drunk.
9. The rest of the Hallel was sung.

Now it was after this supper that the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper. “After supper” is specifically designated as the time (1 Corinthians 11:25). No lamb of any kind was in evidence at this supper.

The cup in view in this verse was connected with the simulated passover and not the Lord’s Supper. John Wesley, Notes on the New Testament, p. 286 wrote, “And He took the cup —“the cup that was brought at the beginning of the Paschal solemnity. “And said, take this and divide it among yourselves; for I will not drink . . .” As if He had said, do not expect Me to drink it: I will drink no more before I die.”

Verse 19

This was the beginning of the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

The eternal commandment of remembering the Savior was uttered. The vast difference in Judaism and Christianity is in this very thing. Under the Law of Moses, there was a “remembrance” made of sin upon every solemn occasion of worship, even upon the day of Atonement; but in Christianity, there is no more a remembrance of sin, but of the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

Verse 20

“In the same way . . .” means that the cup, just like the bread, that is, both elements of the Lord’s Supper, were taken after supper. It is regrettable that some have failed to make the distinction noted here, even going so far as to suppose that the cup may precede the bread in observing the Supper; but a true understanding of what is here stated refutes such error.

“Which is poured out for you . . .” “What a glimpse of the power and Godhead of Jesus in this. In a few short hours, He would be arrested, and on the morrow He would be crucified; but here, He calmly announced that His was to be poured out for the sins of men, setting up a memorial of it unto all generations.

Evidently, the reason for Luke’s introduction of that first cup of the simulated Passover into the record here was for the purpose of dissociating the two events.

Verses 21-23

“The hand of the one betraying Me . . .” J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 767) observed, “This verse is a strong support of the view that Judas received the sacrament, but it is not conclusive.”

Verse 24

What a shame it was that in the very act of the Lord’s giving the memorial supper, the apostles still have been concerned over places of rank in the kingdom!

Verse 25

“The Kings of the Gentiles . . .” Jesus is condemning the “lording over them” type of government so characteristic of all nations. He forbade such systems in His kingdom.

“Benefactors . . .) Everett F. Harrison (op. cit., p. 264) says, “This was a title carried by the Greek kings of Egypt and Syria.” In all ages usurpers loved to call themselves by titles, which denied their essential character; nor has the device perished from the earth. Are not such titles as Innocent, Pius, and Boniface exactly of the same quality?

Verse 26

This is the prohibition of such tiers of rank and authority as those in vogue among earthly governments; But not so with you.

Verse 27

Albert Barnes (Notes on the New Testament, p. 148) noted, "This was said in connection with His washing their feet." (John 13:12-15)

Verses 28-30

H. D. M. Spence (Pulpit Commentary, Luke, p. 200) wrote, "This promise refers to earth and this life . . . His kingdom would be administered by them . . . For centuries, the story of civilization has been the story of this kingdom."

"At My table in My kingdom . . ." This identifies the church, wherein the Lord's Table is ever found, to be the kingdom in view. That man who is not eating and drinking at the Lord's Table is not in the kingdom of God.

"You will set on thrones judging . . ." These thrones are to be understood spiritually as are the "twelve tribes of Israel." This refers to the word of the holy apostles as the supreme authority in the Lord's church. Also, it should be noted that death would not remove them from office, nor would successors to the Twelve be envisioned by the Lord.

Luke does not mention "twelve thrones," but Matthew did. (Matthew 19:28)

"My kingdom . . ." This is the only instance in which Jesus calls the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, "My kingdom." The kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ.

Verses 31-34

"Satan has demanded permission . . ." Christ here spoke of the kingdom of evil as a domain ruled over by an intelligent, personal head.

Peter's defection was not due so much to his personal weakness as it was to the weakness of all men without the Savior. The Great Sacrifice had not yet been offered. For a few hours, the Prince of Life would be under the dominion of the powers of darkness; and it was impossible that under those conditions Peter

could make good his boast. Besides his heart, even then, was not completely in tune with the will of God.

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 569) observed that, “The inclusion of this prediction and its subsequent fulfillment is a testimony to the historical truth,” of the gospels.

CHANGED STATUS OF THE APOSTLES

Upon the eve of His death, the Lord called attention to a dramatic change in the status of the apostles. Till that time, there had been no need for them to be concerned in any manner with worldly needs and provisions, the Lord having taken care of everything; but, with His death, resurrection, and ascension to the other world, all that was to be changed. Prudence, foresight, even means for self-defense, would be needed; and so He instructed them.

Verse 35

‘This called attention to the fact of their earthly needs having been so long provided for them without care or exertion on their part.

Verse 36

The absolute pacifist tradition among Christians of all ages and the acceptance of it by many commentators make this verse “real problem” for many. Most commentators view this passage as figurative, as did, Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 569) who said, “The Lord intended (these words) in a figurative sense.” But if the sword is figurative, what about the purse, the bag, and the robe?

Herschel H. Hobbs (An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, p. 307) said, “It is impossible to tone down this statement; neither can we dismiss it as not being a genuine saying of Jesus.”

The clear meaning of the passage is that “a sword” is the one thing needful, even surpassing in priority such an important item as a robe. The two errors to be avoided here are

- (1) the supposition that gospel should be spread by the sword, and
- (2) the notion that a sword should ever be employed against lawful authority.

Before the evening was over, the Lord would have further occasion to demonstrate the proper and improper uses of the sword.

Albert Barnes (*op. cit.*, p. 150) was certainly correct in his view that “These directions (concerning the sword) were not made with reference to His being taken in the garden, but to their future lives.”

J. S. Lamar (*The New Testament Commentary, Vol II, p. 260*) expressed surprise “to find several of the ablest Protestant expositors interpreting (this passage) as a warrant for self-defense.”

Nevertheless, the view maintained here is that self-defense is exactly what Jesus taught. Self-defense is a basic, natural right of all men, and there is no lawful government on earth that denies it. Just why should it be supposed that Jesus denied to Christians such a basic right has never be explained.

“Resist not evil . . . go the second mile . . . turn the other cheek . . . give your robe also, etc,” are not applicable to situations in which one’s life is threatened or endangered.

Verses 37-38

That which is written must be fulfilled . . .” The avowed intention of the Pharisees was to kill Jesus by assassination; and, despite their change of strategy due to the treachery of Judas, many of them doubtlessly preferred the method of killing Jesus they had already agreed upon; and in the view here is that Christ would have ordered the apostles to resist any effort to assassinate Him.

The sword in view here, therefore, was an assurance that His purpose of witnessing His godhead before the Sanhedrin would not be thwarted by an untimely assassination. When the time came, of course, Jesus would submit to arrest by lawful authority; emphatically dramatized the willingness of His submission.

Albert Barnes (*op. cit.*, p. 150) noted that, “The apostles followed the customs of the country, and had some means of defense,” is doubtless true.

“It is enough . . .” There is no valid reason for supposing that these words mean anything other than “two swords are enough.” As a matter of fact, the swords

were a necessary part of the drama of the Lord's arrest. Jesus used the excision of Malchus' ear as an occasion to command Peter to put his sword into "its place," a powerful endorsement of the premise that such a sword of self-defense has its place. Significantly, even then, Jesus neither commanded Peter to throw his sword away or surrender it.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Verses 39-40

"To the Mount of Olives . . ." This was to a place called Gethsemane in the Valley of the Kidron. Even on that tragic night, the Savior was more concerned for the spiritual welfare of His apostles than for Himself.

Verses 41-42

The taking of Peter, James and John to a position nearer to Himself, the triple repetition of the prayer, and other important details were omitted in Luke's account.

"Remove this cup . . ." The utter repugnance of so horrible a death as Jesus confronted sent the Savior to His knees; and there, wrestling with God in prayer, He brought His human nature into submissive compliance with the Father's will.

The implications here are profound. There was no way God could remove the cup of suffering from Jesus without abandoning the purpose of human redemption. Some have interpreted the "cup" as the agony itself, so great that Jesus was in imminent danger of dying before He ever came to the cross.

Whether this was truly the "cup" or not is uncertain, but the appearance of an angel to strengthen the Lord in that agony surely suggests that it was at least an element in it.

Verse 43

This marvelous detail which explains so much which would be otherwise unknown was supplied only by Luke.

In John, the Lord's majestic appearance prostrated a whole company of soldiers on their faces, in the synoptics, He appears in utter weakness, agony, and even fear. This verse harmonizes both pictures of our Lord, the synoptics giving His

state before the strengthening of the angel, and John giving it after the angel's mission was completed.

“Strengthening Him . . .” Herschel H. Hobbs (op. cit., p. 312) noted that “this has primary reference to physical strength.” Just as angels came and strengthened Jesus following His temptation in the wilderness, an angel was ready here to provide that physical strength without which Jesus might have died before the time.

H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 203) said, “A divine refreshing pervaded Him, body and soul; and thus He received strength to continue to the last of the struggle.”

Verse 44

The word for “drops of blood” is *thromboi* used only here in the New Testament. Herschel H. Hobbs (op. cit., p. 312) said, “It means clots of blood” and was used by the physician Luke in the same manner as was common in ancient medical works. The spiritual overtones of this were noted by Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 309) thus, “Sweat came in with sin, and was a branch of the curse (Genesis 3:19).

When Christ was made sin and a curse for us, He underwent a grievous sweat, that in the sweat of His face we might eat the bread of life.” Regarding this blood-sweat, it is a mistake to suppose any exaggeration here. George R. Bliss (op. cit., p. 323) wrote, “Aristotle (Hist. Anim. iii:19) said that in certain extraordinary states the blood becomes very liquefied, and flows in such a manner that some have perspired blood.”

J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. 767) said that, “Great mental agony has been known to produce this phenomenon.” The fact that death usually followed very quickly after such a blood-sweat suggests the necessity of the angel's mission to strengthen Jesus, who Himself described His condition as being “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” (Matthew 26:38)

Verses 45-46

Mortal men are incapable of knowing fully the nature and extent of the Savior's agony; but it was there in Gethsemane that our Lord made the final irrevocable decision to bear our sins on the tree.

G. Campbell Morgan (The Gospel of Luke, in loco) said, “All I can say is that as I ponder it, through the darkened window there is a mystic light shining, showing me the terrors of the cross more clearly than I see them even when I came to Calvary.”

“Sleeping for sorrow . . .” Only Luke the physician connected the sorrows of the apostles with their sleeping contrary to Jesus’ instructions; but surely that was very important element in it.

Regarding this event in the garden, Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 578) quoted the Jewish scholar, Montifiore, “One cannot help but marvel at the wonderful grace and beauty, the exquisite tact and discretion, which the narrative displays.

There is not a word too little; there is not a word too much.”

THE BETRAYAL

Verse 47

E. J. Tinsley (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 195) saw this verse as “a suggestion that Judas did not actually kiss Jesus (Mark and Matthew both say that he did)” is a perfect example of the type of irresponsible criticism so often indulged in by radical critics, there is no suggestion at all in this place that Judas did not kiss Jesus; but there is rather a statement that just before he did, so, the Lord addressed him as in the next verse.

Verse 48

There is no vocabulary sufficiently extensive to describe the dastardly act of Judas Iscariot.

“Son of man . . .” By such a word, Jesus reminded Judas that it was no mere human teacher that he was betraying. The Divine Messiah was the one whom he betrayed by a kiss; and such an act was so unbelievable that it called forth the Savior’s exclamation here. There is a further glimpse of the Lord’s omniscience here. Before Judas profaned the Lord’s cheek with his kiss, Jesus exposed his intention.

Verses 49-50

The apostles had misunderstood the Lord's mention of the sword, and that misunderstanding led the incident here. The sword was a proper weapon of self-defense against brigands, but not against the lawful authority. Such was the Savior's respect for the legal government that He willingly submitted to it, even when it was controlled by evil men engaged in an illegal and shameful project.

"And a certain one of them struck . . ." Peter was not named here as the one who used the sword; and from this it must be assumed that when Luke wrote this gospel, Peter was still alive, discretion demanding that his name be withheld.

Tertullian stated that Peter was crucified by Nero (37-68 A.D.); and here is a telling argument for the early date of the gospel of Luke.

John, writing long afterward, did not hesitate to name Peter, and from this it is certain that considerations of Peter's safety required the omission of his name here.

Verse 51

The servant who lost his ear was Malchus (John 18:10); and Luke with the physician's characteristic observance noted that it was his right ear.

"Stop! No more of this . . ." Norval Geldenhuys (*op. cit.*, p. 582) understood it as, "Let events take their course, even to My arrest." He saw the remark as addressed to the Lord's disciples with the meaning that they should not interfere any further with the arrest.

"And healed him . . ." "Like all the miracles of Jesus, this one had definite and necessary utility. One great purpose of the Lord in the arrest was to procure exemption of the apostles from custody, as particularly evident in John; but, with Peter's rash act, such would have been far more difficult except for the timely healing of the excised ear.

Verses 52-53

Herschel H. Hobbs (*op. cit.*, p. 315) said, "Swords and staves" indicate that "both Roman soldiers and temple police" were used in the arrest. Only Luke,

however, spelled out the presence of the chief priests who had come along to make sure the mission succeeded.

“Daily in the temple . . .” This is a reference to the extensive ministry of Christ in Jerusalem in the final weeks following the long “journey” to the Holy City emphasized throughout by Luke. Also, this is another bit of evidence that Wednesday of this final week was not a day of retirement.

“The power of darkness . . .” This is another echo of the great truth so strongly stressed in John, further evidence that the Christ of the synoptics is one with the Christ of John.

It has been frequently observed that if this night arrest of Jesus had truly been the Passover, none of the chief priests, nor the temple guards, would have been permitted to bear arms after sundown of Nisan 14. It was therefore the night before, on Nisan 13 (technically the 14th) that this arrest occurred.

Verse 54

The legal high priest was Caiaphas, but Annas his father-in-law was held to be the rightful high priest.

He was deposed by Rome; but both of them occupied the same palace; and Peter’s denial occurred in the courtyard where both Annas and Caiaphas lived. Luke very briefly mentioned the two arrangements, or trials, before Annas and Caiaphas.

“Peter was following at a distance . . .” Peter’s failure was partially due to some things he did, such as following “at a distance,” warming himself at the fire kindled by Jesus’ enemies, his rash resort to carnal weapons, his boastful promise, to go to prison and death with Jesus, etc.

Verse 55

“They had kindled a fire . . .” Psychologically, Peter placed himself at a disadvantage by “warming himself by the devil’s fire.” Accepting favors of enemies of the truth is just as dangerous now as it was when Peter sat in the firelight so long ago.

It is refreshing indeed to recall that, a few days later, there was another fire by the seaside, kindled by the Lord Himself, and like this one blazing forth at a very early hour in the morning; and by that other fire Peter confessed three times that he loved the Lord! (John 21:9)

PETER'S DENIAL

Verses 56-62

One of those who accosted Peter was a kinsman of Malchus whose ear Peter had cut off. If Peter recognized the connection, this would have increased his apprehension. (John 18:26)

Luke omitted any reference to Peter's cursing and swearing, but like all the gospel writers, did not fail to spell out completely the act of denial itself. Is this not another example of the prophetic power of Jesus, or His omniscience? Of course it is. No one but God could spell out exactly what will happen by three o'clock tomorrow morning, as Jesus did here.

There is a weariness in the continual carping of critics that the omniscience of Jesus is found principally in John.

"Cock crow . . ." The cock crowd was a Roman division of time, marking the close of the third watch, about three o'clock in the morning.

"Wept bitterly . . ." One's heart cannot fail to be touched by the grief of this robust outdoorsman sobbing out his remorse for his impulsive denial of the Lord whom he loved. Sin had taken him unawares, when his defenses were down, when the powers of darkness were ascendant; but none of the extenuating circumstances removed the sting of his heart, nor could a flood of tears wash it away.

"And Peter remembered . . ." The only trouble with this was that it came a bit late to prevent Peter's denial. If only he could have remembered what Jesus had prophesied somewhat earlier, he might have found in that remembrance some means of averting failure.

Verses 63-65

There were six mockeries of Jesus in all. All of the mockeries were due to the instinctive hatred of carnal and un-regenerated men for holiness and truth.

Especially reprehensible in this glimpse of the mockeries provided by Luke, since it took place in the court of the high priests of Israel, by the religious leaders of the Jews. It might have been expected at the hands of the Roman soldiery, long accustomed to deeds of blood and violence; but it was especially shameful that the priests would have condoned such a thing.

THE SANHEDRIN GIVES THE DEATH VERDICT

Verse 66

The night trials of Jesus were illegal; but so also was this gathering of the Sanhedrin on Nisan 14th, a high festival upon which no trial of any kind whatever was legal! Of course, the purpose of this assembly, the third in the six trials of Jesus, was to lend some semblance of legality to the preliminary trials held the night before.

Verses 67-69

This ten-second summary of the three trials of Jesus which occupied the whole of a long night and a full-dress rehearsal after daylight does not give a hundredth of all that was said and done.

There were many, many questions, and answers, and adjurations, and restatements, and recapitulations throughout the long trials Jesus endured at the hands of the chosen people.

One of the gospel's giving question or an answer in slightly different form from that in another gospel may not be intelligently advocated as a contradiction or discrepancy. All that is written in all of the gospels is totally and unequivocally true, there being no honest way to deny a word of it.

“If You are the Christ, tell us . . .” At one point during the trials the high priest phrased the question thus: “Are You the Christ the Son of the Blessed?” And to this, Jesus replied, “I am, and you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (Mark 14:61-62)

Christ preferred to answer the question which permitted the imperial “I AM” reply, rather than the type mentioned here, to which He replied differently.

“If I tell you, you will not believe . . . “Jesus had indeed told them hundreds of time, but they would not believe. “If I ask a question, you will not answer . . .” Those evil rulers were not able to answer Jesus’ questions; they could not stand against Him in open discussion; and even in this trial, they refused to answer His arguments.

“From now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God . . .”

This is an emphatic declaration from the lips of Jesus that He was indeed the divine Messiah, the very power of God; and it must be pointed out that the Sanhedrin fully understood it as such, thus making them more perceptive than those who blindly ignore the impact of this declaration.

Verse 70

The phrasing of this question, “Are You the Son of God?” is proof the Sanhedrin understood the meaning of Jesus’ reply.

“Yes, I am . . .” has the weight of, “Yes, at last you have seen the point of what I am saying!” It is a gross error to hail these words as anything except the most positive affirmation of Jesus, that He was and ever will be, the Son of God.

Verse 71

By the sheer power of morality and intellect, Jesus at last forced the officialdom of the Hebrews into using the only charge that He would permit them to use, namely His claim to be the Divine Messiah.

All of the other charges which they had so maliciously advocated against Him for so long, as Sabbath breaking, casting out demons by the power of the devil, etc., all dropped out of sight here, even that garbled quote about destroying the temple; and the only reason the leaders had for demanding Jesus’ death, came into view, not merely here, but in every one of the four gospels, that being that, “He made Himself to be the Son of God.” (John 19:7)

That was the issue that Jesus chose to seal with the blood of the cross; and the fury of the Sanhedrin at being forced to face that issue became apparent in the deceitful conduct before Pilate.

This, of course, was the death penalty pronounced by the sacred court of the Jews; but the fact of the death penalty having been removed from their jurisdiction sent the next phase of the trials into the courts of the Gentiles.

Wonderful, wonderful was the appearance of Jesus in these fantastic trials, wherein He so gloriously attested His eternal power and Godhead.

Chapter 23

This chapter is Luke's record of the final trials of Jesus before Pilate (Verses 1-7), before Herod (Verses 8-12), and before Pilate again (Verses 13-25), Simon of Cyrene bearing the cross, the prophecy to the daughters of Jerusalem, and the crucifixion of the malefactors (Verses 26-32), the crucifixion of our Lord, three sayings from the cross, the inscription, and the death of Jesus (Verses 33-49), and the entombment (Verses 50-56).

Verse 1

Pilate was the fifth procurator of Judea, holding office from 26-36 A.D. In view of all that is known of this evil ruler from the writings of Philo, and from the New Testament itself, it is incredible that one would say that, "There is not enough information about Him to make a valid judgment of the kind of man He was!" (Ray Summers, Commentary of Luke, p. 294)

Luke recorded that Jesus Himself mentioned Pilate's mingling the blood of Galilean worshipers with the blood of their sacrifices in the temple itself (13:15). What is in this chapter alone provides ample information upon which to form a definitive judgment regarding what kind of a man Pilate was.

The Sanhedrin had just concluded the formal daylight trial at which they had condemned Jesus to death; but since they were prohibited by the Romans from the execution of such a sentence (John 18:31), they were compelled to pursue their objective in the court of the pagan governor.

Verse 2

There was no mention of those hypocrites of the true reason for their condemnation of Jesus, which was that He had claimed to be the Divine Messiah, the Son of God.

William Barclay (The Gospel of Luke, p. 300) said, “They charged Jesus with seditious agitation; with encouraging men not to pay tribute to Caesar; and with assuming the title 'king'. Every single item of the charge was a lie and they knew it.”

Verse 3

H. D. M. Spence (The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 16, Luke, p. 235) noted, that the very first thing Pilate did was to attempt an avoidance of condemning Jesus, or even judging Him at all. He wrote, “Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law.” (John 18:31) The Sanhedrin replied that they were not allowed to put any man to death . . . revealing their deadly purpose in the case of Jesus.

Some have understood this verse as indicating Pilate’s willingness to accept the third charge against Jesus (that He laid claim to being a secular king.) Anthony Lee Ash (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 135) observed, “Pilate knew the Jews would follow a king, not deliver Him up.”

If Jesus had been what the Sanhedrin said He was, a claimant of secular kingship, they would have followed and supported Him unto death. In fact, some of those very hypocrites had spent an entire day trying to get Jesus to be the quartermaster of a secular army against Rome. (John 6)

Thus Pilate’s pinpointing the third charge had no reference to his being taken in by such a lie, but rather shows his astonishment at it.

“It is as you say . . .” This has been interpreted as noncommittal, a denial, and as an affirmation of Jesus’ kingship, the latter being the true meaning.

From John, it is learned that the Lord explained thoroughly to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. There is no evidence at all that Pilate ever doubted Jesus’ word on this.

Verse 4

This was another effort of Pilate to avoid condemning Jesus, there having been at least seven of these in all. This was the point at which Pilate should have dismissed the charges, called out the soldiers in the tower of Antonio, and dismissed the mob. In the meantime he had a brilliant idea, prompted by what the Sanhedrin next said.

Verse 5

“He stirs up the people . . .” had, in context, connotations of sedition and was as false as all the other charges. Again and again, Jesus had carefully avoided arousing any inordinate enthusiasm of the people.

“Galilee . . .” That was the word that caught Pilate’s attention, giving him what he hoped would be a means of avoiding responsibility.

Verses 6-7

E. J. Tinsley (Cambridge Bible Commentary, p. 198) said, “After observing that this incident appears only in Luke said, Some scholars have doubted whether this trial before Herod ever took place.” It may be assumed that Tinsley is among that group of scholars. The sheep of God, however, know their Shepherd’s voice. Every word in the sacred gospels is historical truth.

Verse 8

Luke alone recorded the “friendly” warning of the Pharisees to Jesus, that “Herod wants to kill You !” (Luke 13:31) It was fully in keeping with Luke’s thoroughness and dependability as a historian that he should have included this incident proving absolutely, that the Pharisees who thus addressed Jesus were lying.

Herod indeed wanted to see Jesus, but it was from curiosity, not from intent to murder. Frank L. Cox (According to Luke, p. 70) commented, “The frivolous Herod, looking upon Jesus as a juggler or magician, was eager for Him to satisfy his vulgar curiosity.”

Verses 9-10

The false charges of the Jewish leaders were so obviously impossible of being true that the Lord did not need to say anything. The known character of Herod was such that it would have been an unnecessary waste on the part of Jesus to have honored any of his questions with a reply.

Verse 11

Herod's conduct in this episode suggests what many in all ages have done with regard to Jesus; they have set Him at naught.

Herod, in the false security afforded by his palatial residence, his bodyguard of soldiers, his wealth and human eminence, saw nothing in the lowly Jesus that he should either honor or respect; but ironically, that evil man's place in history is due altogether to the fact that Jesus the Christ stood before him for a brief while during that eventful week. Herod, after indulging in the shameful business of the mockery, acquitted Jesus and sent Him back to Pilate.

Verse 12

Charles L. Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary, p. 605) wrote, "The cause of their enmity is not known, but it is commonly believed to have been Pilate's slaying of the Galileans mentioned in Luke 13:1-2. It was Pilate's civility and deference to Herod which healed the breach."

It has often been noted that old enemies often become friends when there is a common opportunity to wound the Lord in the person of His followers. In this whole episode, Herod appears as the most contemptible. Herschel H. Hobbs (An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, p. 328) agreed that, "In this horrible picture, no figure appears so ignominious as Herod."

Before leaving this unit of teaching, attention should be directed to the slander that this episode, "was included as part of (Luke's) attempt to remove responsibility for the death of Jesus from Roman authorities." (E. J. Tinsley, op. cit., p. 198)

Not only is there no such attempt in this paragraph, nor in the whole New Testament, to do such a thing; but, on the other hand, the culpability, dastardly

cowardice, unfeeling injustice, and utter incompetence of Pilate are overwhelmingly evident throughout the chapter.

SECOND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

The six trials of Jesus were: before Annas, before Caiaphas, before the Sanhedrin at daybreak, before Pilate, before Herod, and again before Pilate. The trial here is the last of the six.

Verses 13-16

In the last sentence of this passage is the shameful injustice of Pontius Pilate. Having declared Jesus to be without “fault,” and further announcing Herod’s corroboration as such a verdict of innocence, Pilate proposed that he would “chastise Him!” Translating the paragraph into the vernacular, Pilate said, “This man is absolutely innocent, and therefore I will beat Him half to death.”

Verses 17-18

The first sentence has been removed from the text on sufficient grounds, but it is true nevertheless, being valuable as commentary. H. D. M. Spence (op. cit., p. 236) commented, “As a Hebrew custom, it is never mentioned save in this place. Such a release was a common incident of a Latin Lectisternium, or feast in honor of the gods. The Greeks had a similar custom at the Thesmophoria. It was probably introduced at Jerusalem by the Roman power.”

There is evidence that Pilate tried to utilize such a custom in his efforts to find a way of releasing Jesus. The wicked hierarchy, however, merely stirred up the people to clamor for the release of Barabbas, a notorious robber, murderer and seditionist, as mentioned in the next verse.

Verse 19

“Barabbas . . .” This name is usually understood to be patronymic, meaning “son of father;” but H. D. M. Spence (Ibid) pointed out another possible meaning which seems to be more probable, Bar-Abbas indeed meaning “son of father,” but Bar-Rabbas means “son of Rabbi.”

The choice of Israel in their preference of this wicked criminal instead of the holy Jesus eventually came down upon the whole nation like an avalanche.

Verses 20-21

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 299) has a very interesting comment on this, in which he pointed out that the “mob took up a chant. He said transliterated into English syllables it is:

Stau-rou, Stau-rou-ton!

Stau-rou, Stau-rou-ton!

Even in English words, the cadence of a chant is present:

Cru-ci-fy, cru-ci-fy-him!

Cru-ci-fy, cru-ci-fy-him!

That was the most dreadful ‘one-two—one-two-three four’ beat ever to sound in the ears of men.”

One can only stand in amazement at the cowardice and injustice of a weakling governor who had the legions of the Roman army under his command, but who nevertheless yielded to a mob’s rape of justice by any such device as this.

Verses 22-23

Here is a list of the efforts Pilate made to release Jesus:

PILATE'S EFFORTS TO AVOID CONDEMNING JESUS

1. He asked that the Jews take Him and judge Him according to their own law. (John 18:31)
2. He announced a verdict of innocence. (Luke 23:4)
3. He sent Him to Herod. Luke 23:5-10)
4. He announced Jesus’ innocence had been confirmed by Herod also. (Luke 23:13-15)
5. He twice offered to substitute a lighter punishment (chastisement). (Luke 23:16- 22)
6. He offered a choice between Barabbas and Christ, hoping the people would choose Jesus to be released. (Matthew 27:15ff)

7. He suggested that they take Jesus without legal process and crucify Him, promising to “look the other way” if they did. (John 19:6)
8. He even appealed to Jesus to perform some wonder, by implication, which would make it easy to release Him. (John 19:11)
9. He “sought the more” to release Him. (John 19:11)

Pilate’s image appears starkly ugly in the chapter before us.

“And their voices began to prevail . . .” Prevail over what? Over a cowardly governor who, with an army at his back, allowed himself to be bullied by the evil priests. Pilate signed the death warrant of a man he had repeatedly declared to be innocent; and, if there is anything worse than this that a governor might be guilty of, it is surely unknown to this writer.

Verses 24-25

There was no extenuation for such a crime on Pilate’s part, his knowledge of Jesus’ innocence, as proved by his repeated efforts to release Him, only aggravating his guilt, not diminishing it. As Luke said, “He gave sentence . . . Jesus he delivered up.”

SIMON OF CYRENE

Verse 26

Most commentators identify this Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21) and with Rufus and his mother (Romans 16:13). The inference is that Simon became a Christian, that his sons Alexander and Rufus were distinguished members of the church in Rome.

Simon’s widow (?), the mother of Rufus (Romans 16:13), was a close friend and associate of the apostle Paul. Although incapable of being proved, such assumptions are quite reasonable.

“Cyrene . . .” F. N. Peloubet (Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary, p. 132) said, “This was a principal city of northern Africa, between Carthage and Egypt, corresponding with modern Tripoli.”

Wm. B. Eerdmans (New Bible Dictionary, p. 285) says, “The Jews formed one of the four recognized classes in the city. It was represented in the Pentecost crowd (Acts 2:10) and evidently had its own (or a shared) synagogue in Jerusalem. (Acts 6:9)

“Coming in from the country . . .” Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 300) thought that Simon might have been “traveling to Jerusalem for Passover and arriving late.” However, the Passover was held that night, not the night before. (John 18:28)

This is another example of numerous New Testament verses which have been misinterpreted due to the Friday crucifixion tradition.

JESUS' PROPHECY TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

Verse 27

J. R. Dummelow (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 768) said, “The warm feeling with which all classes of women regarded Jesus is especially marked in this the gospel of womanhood.”

Verse 28

“Daughters of Jerusalem . . .” indicates that the vast majority of these were residents of that city; and significantly, Jesus thought more about the woe which was coming upon the Holy City than His own terrible sufferings. Such selflessness was never known except in Jesus.

Verses 29-31

“Blessed are the barren . . .” H. D. M. Spence said, “This is a strange beatitude to be spoken to the women of Israel, who through all their checkered history, so passionately longed that this barrenness might not be their portion.”

“The green tree . . . the dry . . .” Farrar’s explanation is correct. “If they act thus to Me, the Innocent and the Holy, what shall be the fate of these, the guilty and the false?” (Ibid.) There is here a dramatic prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, in which women especially would be deprived and suffer tribulations.

George R. Bliss (An American Commentary II, Luke, p. 335) wrote, “The green tree suggests the innocent and holy Savior in the spirituality and vigor of His life; the dry tree represents the morally dead and sapless people, typified by the fig

tree, blasted by His word, four days earlier.” Thus, by this prophecy, as Jesus left the city for the last time, He prophesied its doom no less than He did upon entering it. (19:41f)

Not even the prospect of immediate death took the Savior’s mind away from the awful penalties that would fall upon Jerusalem for His rejection. The fires of suffering consuming Jesus (the green tree) would be nothing to compare with the fires of destruction that would burn up the dead tree (Jerusalem, judicially and morally dead).

Verse 32

This was Pilate’s doing, and was probably designed as an insult to the Jews who would not have been favorable too such executions in such proximity to their great Passover (that night); but God overruled this vengeful deed of the governor in the fulfillment of prophecy. “He was numbered with transgressors,” and “they made His grave with the wicked.” (Isaiah 53:12, 9)

THE CRUCIFIXION

Verse 33

None of the gospel writers dwelt upon the horrors of that terrible death. Crucifixion of the Christ had been prophesied the better part of a millennium before it occurred (Psalm 22) at a point in history when such a means of execution had never been invented.

Long ago, such a torturing death was outlawed by the conscience of all mankind.

Verse 34

“Father, forgive them . . .” This was the first of the seven utterances of Jesus from the cross; and it has the utility of indicating two centers of forgiveness, one on earth, the other in heaven. It may not be supposed that Jesus’ prayer for the forgiveness of the soldiers who crucified Him implied their immediate forgiveness in heaven.

Jesus, as a man, forgave them; but the matter of their eternal forgiveness was still contingent upon their faith and acceptance of the terms of the Christian gospel.

“And they cast lots, dividing up His garments . . .” William Barclay (op. cit., p. 297) noted, “Every Jew wore five articles of apparel: the inner tunic, the outer robe, the girdle, the sandals, and the turban. There remained the great outer robe. It was woven in one piece. (John 19:23-24) To cut it would have ruined it; and so the soldiers gambled for it.”

Verse 35

What the rulers meant by this was evil, and it was also untrue in the sense in which they meant it. Jesus could indeed have saved Himself by coming down from the cross, because He did a far more wonderful thing three days later by coming forth out of the grave.

However, it was not possible for Christ thus to save Himself (by coming down from the cross) without aborting His mission of human redemption; and in this spiritual sense, what the evil rulers said was true, “He saved others but was unable to save Himself.”

Such taunting mockery seems nearly incredible in the mouths of the rulers of Israel. How deep was their hatred, how blind their perception, how unfeeling their hearts, and how wicked were their purposes that they should thus have joined in such a mockery of the world’s only Savior!

Verses 36-37

There were three instances of vinegar being offered to Jesus:

1. There was a draught prepared with narcotics and stupefying drugs which Jesus refused. (Matthew 27:34)
2. The one here mentioned by Luke was one of the tortures of the crucifixion, (the soldiers) lifting their sour wine to His lips and then whisking it rapidly away.
3. The third was when the Lord was almost exhausted, the soldiers possibly acting in this case out of compassion. (John 19:28-30)

There is no indication that Jesus accepted any wine while upon the cross.

Verse 38

Everett F. Harrison (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 270) said, “The full inscription was probably: THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF the JEWS.”

This is most certainly correct, being a composite of what all four of sacred gospels have recorded. The notion that Pilate believed, even in the slightest degree, that Christ was a claimant of Caesar’s throne is rejected.

Norval Geldenhuys (*Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* p. 610) expressed it, “We know that Pilate was thoroughly conscious of the fact that Jesus laid no claim to kingship (in an earthly sense); and it is certain that by means of the superscription he revenged himself on the Jews and was not mocking Jesus.”

Verse 39

At first, both malefactors reproached Jesus (*Matthew 27:44*); and Luke’s mention of what one of the two said is not a denial of that; and quite likely the one referred to here was the more vehement of the two; because, as Luke would relate in a moment, the other malefactor turned to the Lord and received forgiveness.

Verses 40-41

This priceless episode, peculiar to Luke, has marvelously enriched the Christian gospel.

The penitent malefactor, despite the fact of having indulged in the reproaches against Christ at the beginning of the crucifixion, as the day had progressed, became more and more aware of the suffering Savior at his side; and later, when the impenitent malefactor took up his mocking reproach again, this repentant thief rebuked him, confessing at the same time that the punishment he was receiving, he deserved.

Verses 42-43

This is the second of the Seven Words spoken by Jesus from the cross. “Paradise. . .” Anthony Lee Ash (*op. cit.*, p. 143) noted, “In some elements of first-

century Judaism, (this word) described the heavenly abode of the soul between death and the resurrection.” Without much doubt, this is the meaning here. After Jesus arose from the dead, He stated that He had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17).

Therefore, Paradise is not identified as the final abode of the blessed. It is the same as “Abraham’s bosom.” (Luke 16:11)

Verses 44-45

These two verses introduce two of the Calvary miracles, of which there are seven. These great wonders were “signs” in the supernatural sense, attesting the godhead of Jesus Christ.

1. At about the sixth hour darkness fell over the whole land.
2. The veil of the temple was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

Verse 46

This was the final of the Seven Words from the cross. “He breathed His last . . .” The loud voice just mentioned was significant. The loud voice shows that Jesus did not die of exhaustion. If death had come from exhaustion, His vocal chords would not have functioned at all.

Jesus’ death was conscious and voluntary, fulfilling His prophecy, recorded in (John 10:17-18).

Verse 47

Luke adds another quotation from the centurion who had charge of the crucifixion: “Truly this was the Son God.” From Matthew’s account it is clear that the words, “Truly this was the Son of God,” were not spoken by the centurion only, “They that were with him” also being subjects of the verb “saying.” (Matthew 27:54)

From Mark’s account it was when the centurion saw that Jesus gave up His spirit, that he recognized Jesus as the Divine Son of God. (Mark 15:39)

Luke states that the centurion “praised God.” How? By confessing that Jesus is the Son of God! In the further quote given by Luke, the centurion said, “Certainly

this man was innocent (righteous).” Is there any denial that he also said, “Truly this man was the Son of God?” Indeed, there is not.

There is no way to deny, either honestly or intelligently, that the situation points to many exclamations having been uttered on that awesome occasion, not merely by the centurion but also by the men who were with him. Some have attempted to scale down the impact of “the Son of God” by rendering the words, “a son of God.”

“Certainly this man was an innocent or (righteous) man . . . “Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 316) said, “The centurion who commanded the guard . . . This testimony amounts to the same as “truly this man was the Son of God; for, if Jesus was a righteous man, He said very truly when He said He was the Son of God, and therefore that testimony of Jesus concerning Himself; must be admitted; for, if it were false, He was not a righteous man.”

Verse 48

This verse corroborates all that Matthew recorded with regard to the earthquake, the opening of the Calvary graves, the darkness over the whole earth, etc.

Verse 49

“All the multitudes . . .” is a reference to the multitudes from all over Palestine, and to the numbers of them who were personally acquainted with Jesus through having seen His mighty deeds and heard His discourses.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

Verse 50

All of the four gospels contain an account of Joseph of Arimathaea and his supplying the tomb in which Jesus was buried. This quadruple testimony emphasizes the importance attached to this event.

Verses 51-52

It appears from the parallels that the verdict pronounced by the Sanhedrin at day break had not been unanimous. It is supposed that neither Nicodemus nor

Joseph had been invited to the meeting, or that, if invited, they had refused to attend, knowing the certain outcome of it and being unwilling to consent to such a judicial murder.

"Arimathaea . . ." This place was identified by Eusebius and Jerome with Ramah, the birthplace of Samuel; but the exact location of it is not known. (The New Bible Dictionary, op cit., p. 81)

"Went to Pilate . . . asked for the body of Jesus . . ." This was a courageous thing to do; but, as ever, when some great crisis occurred, God raised up a Joseph to meet it. So it was during the famine in Egypt; so it was when Jesus was an infant; and so it was here.

Verse 53

"Where no one had ever lain . . ." The Old Testament miracle of a man's having been raised from the dead by his body's being thrust into contact with the bones of a prophet (2 Kings 13:21) might have given the enemies of the gospel the idea of attributing the resurrection of Christ to some similar thing; but Providence countermanded any such conceit by causing the burial of Jesus in a virgin tomb.

Verse 54

"Sabbath was about to begin . . ." This was not the ordinary Sabbath (which came on every Saturday), but the special "high day" (John 19:31) Sabbath marking every 15th of Nisan (which could come on any day of the week); and this verse says that that Sabbath "drew on," meaning that it would begin at sunset, about which the solemn Passover meal would be observed, the following twenty-four hours being, by God's special commandment, also called "a holy convocation" upon which "no servile work": would be done, and having full status as a holy Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:7-8; Numbers 28:18, 25; Exodus 12:16)

Since this Sabbath was tied to the 15th of Nisan. It could fall on any day of the week; and in the year 30 A.D., it fell upon Friday, which by Jewish reckoning began at sunset (about the time Jesus was buried) on Thursday—the day He died.

That this solemn Passover meal was actually eaten after Jesus was dead and buried appears from John 18:28.

Verse 55

It is good that Luke recorded this, because it refutes the lie that on the morning of the resurrection perhaps the women went to the wrong grave! No more dependable group of witnesses could be imagined than a multitude of women, all of whom saw the grave and observed the manner in which the body was buried.

Verse 56

This is not a denial that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus might also have made such preparations for anointing the body, a tender act of love that could not be rendered because of the sudden onset of the holy Passover and its special high Sabbath.

Significantly, by the falling of that high day upon a Friday (beginning on Thursday at sunset), there were back-to-back Sabbaths, Friday and Saturday, a truth witnessed in the Greek text of Matthew 28:1 which speaks of “the end of the Sabbaths (plural)” and says that the first day of the week came toward the “end of one of the Sabbaths,” after which the events of the resurrection began to unfold.

Considering the lapse of three nights and two whole days before the anointing of the body of Jesus, or the wrapping it in spices, could begin, due to double Sabbaths, it is not hard to understand why those who intended thus to minister to a dead body would have been about their business “very early” on the first day of the week (Mark 16:2).

As God would have it, however, no ministrations whatever were required for the body of our Lord, other than that which is mentioned in these verses. He rose from the dead even before the women arrived to anoint Him.

Chapter 24

This final chapter of Luke briefly summarizes the astonishment and perplexity of finding the tomb empty, giving the experience of the Galilean women (Verses 1-12), then giving a full and vivid account of an appearance of Christ to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Verses 13-35). Luke then recounted the appearance of Jesus to the Eleven and they that were with them, concluding with a summary statement of Jesus’ last words and a brief account of the ascension (Verses 44-53).

Verses 1-3

Sabbath day . . .” This was Saturday, the second of the back-to-back Sabbaths intervening between the crucifixion and the first day of the week.

“They came to the tomb . . .” “They” is the women who had followed Him from Galilee (23:55); and, from a comparison with verse 10 below, these seem to have been another group of women, not necessarily the same as those mentioned elsewhere in the gospels, though many of both groups were from Galilee.

“The stone rolled away . . .” “The seal on the grave, placed there by the Roman government, had obviously been broken, which would have required a deputation from the governor’s office to investigate it.

Furthermore, the military authorities would have thoroughly investigated the fantastic lie of the guard concerning what happened “while they were asleep” and with the activities of the Lord’s followers beginning at the crack of dawn the same day, and increasing as the day progressed—all of these things, and many others of which we know nothing about, made the day of Jesus’ resurrection one of the busiest in history.

The Sanhedrin, would they not have investigated? They bribed the soldiers to lie about what had happened, for they had witnessed some of the phenomena attending the resurrection; but it may be counted certain that they made their own investigation, decided that they had no case against the soldiers, and attempted to cover up the truth with lies.

Something of the nature of the rock-hewn sepulcher is evident in the stone that closed it, the same having been a large wheel-like rock fitted into a groove parallel to the entrance. It was so large that even a whole group of women would not have been able to move it.

“Did not find the body . . .” The empty grave of Jesus, along with the undisturbed grave clothes within, proved the resurrection of Jesus to be a fact; but to minds so long schooled against any possibility of a resurrection from the dead, it was a fact which they, at the time, could not fully believe.

Verses 4-5

“Two men suddenly stood near . . .) These were angels, as indicated by the dazzling raiment; and it is interesting that commentators generally set themselves in motion immediately to show that this does not contradict the other two synoptics’ mention of but “one” angel. J. S. Lamar (The New Testament Commentary, Vol. II, p. 276) wrote, “Matthew and Mark mentions but one these, for the reason, perhaps, that only one of them spoke. But in doing so he represented both, and therefore it was virtually, as in our text the speech of both.

“Why do you seek the living among the dead . . .” William Barclay (The Gospel of Luke, p. 305) wrote, There are many who still look for Jesus among the dead. There are those who regard Jesus as the greatest man and the noblest hero who ever lived, who lived the loveliest life ever lived on earth and who then died. That will not do! Jesus is not dead; He is alive! He is not a hero of the past, but a living presence today!

Verses 6-7

Angels of heaven announced the resurrection of Jesus because no human eye beheld the wonder. The fact certified by the heavenly messengers here is the most important of all human history.

Herschel N. Hobbs (An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, p. 346) said, “Luke’s medical training would have prejudiced him against a bodily resurrection. Yet, having traced all things accurately, he was so convinced of its reality that he recorded one of the most beautiful and complete accounts of it. This man of science, this historian of the first rank stands as a bulwark against those who would deny this Miracle of Miracles in which Jesus is declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead.”

The resurrection is the central fact of the gospel. Donald G. Miller (The Layman’s Bible Commentary, 1959) wrote, “Without it, the words of Paul stand as the epitaph of a dead Christianity, “Your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins.” (1 Corinthians 15:17)

Verses 8-9

“To the eleven and all the rest . . .” is a reference to the apostles and to the other persons with them, the strong likelihood being that the women whose names are given in the next verse, were included in “the rest.”

Verse 10

Luke at once injected the parenthesis to show who “the rest” were, being the women mentioned but including others whose names are not given. “With them . . .” “Them” is Mary Magdalene, etc., the affirmation then being the testimony of both groups concurred; thus, in that understanding of it, the testimony of the Galilean women agreed “with them” who reported separately.

Verse 11

Far from having concerted a series of lies to claim a resurrection that never occurred, the Eleven refused at first to believe it and were not convinced till that night of the resurrection day when Jesus appeared to them (and a certain number of others) in the upper room.

The unbelieving stance of the Eleven was their “hardness of heart.” (Mark 16:14) It is natural to suppose that one of the impediments to the unbelief of the Eleven was the fact of our Lord’s appearing first to Mary Magdalene, and to at least one other company of women and very probably to two other companies of women and again to two ordinary disciples on the way to Emmaus “before He appeared to the Eleven.”

The Apostles who had been so bothered about who would be the head man in the kingdom, it would appear, were personally slighted by those first appearances for the sake of teaching them a lesson of humility; and, when the Lord finally appeared to the Eleven, the disciples from Emmaus were present, and probably Mary Magdalene and certain other women also.

Most assuredly, this verse teaches that the Eleven were of a mind to reject the testimony thus far received; and it is equally sure that they were wrong in so doing, for Jesus upbraided them for it. (Mark 16:14)

Verse 12

Here Luke abbreviated the whole incident so fully presented in. (John 20:1- 9). This abbreviation cannot be viewed as a contradiction of the longer account, being rather an abridgement of it, focusing upon the extremely important key fact of the episode, namely the position of the linen cloths. Everett F. Harrison (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 273) said, “They kept the same position they had when the body was in them.”

“The linen cloths . . .” In Luke 23:53, Luke had mentioned Joseph’s wrapping Jesus’ body in a “linen cloth” but here, it is quite evident that before the wrapping was done, the cloth was reduced to strips.

B. F. Westcott (Commentary on the Gospel of John, p. 281) said, “The exact word for cloths is the diminutive form which is used in Greek medical writings for bandages. This distinguishes these swatches in which the body was bound from the linen cloth.”

APPEARANCE TO DISCIPLES ON EMMAUS ROAD

Instead of giving a list of appearances, Luke here described one particular appearance fully. As Norval Geldenhuys (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke) said, “In it there is so strikingly depicted what was going on in the hearts of the Savior’s followers on that day, and how Jesus, by word and act, as He appeared to them, removed all their pangs of despair.”

Ray Summers (Commentary on Luke, p. 322) said, “This is the most beautiful of all the post-resurrection accounts,” and William Barclay (op. cit., p. 308) denominated it “another of the immortal short stories of the world.”

Verse 13

“Emmaus . . .” Charles L. Childers (Beacon Bible Commentary, p. 611) noted, “This village is now called Kolonieh, so called from the emperor Titus having made it a colony for some of his veterans. It is located, as Luke says, about sixty furlongs or stadia from Jerusalem. A stadion is 606.75 feet. Thus, the village was about six and three fourths miles from Jerusalem.”

“Two of them were going . . .” One of these was Cleopas, there being no other mention of him in the New Testament; and the other is not known.

Luke, a Gentile would not have referred to “our rulers,” in speaking of the authorities. The fact of these two disciples having been obscure, ordinary disciples without any particular distinction in the fellowship of the Lord’s followers, as J. R. Dummelow (Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 769) noted, “This is a pledge of the authenticity of the narrative.”

Verses 14-16

The conversation of these two indicates their deep interest and concern in the knowledge of things pertaining to Jesus; and the fact of their not recognizing Christ indicates that Jesus did not intend for them to recognize Him.

Verse 17

It was so incredible, in the view of these two, that any person whosoever in the environs of Jerusalem should have been unaware of the stupendous events unfolded there so recently, or that such a person would not have known anything about them, that they stopped walking, astounded at what appeared to them incredible.

Of course Jesus did know all about those events, far more than they knew; nor was Jesus’ question here for the purpose of

- (a) either of procuring information for Himself, or,
- (b) of professing any need of enlightenment from them. It was a means of inviting Himself into the conversation which had evidently continued for some little while after Jesus fell in step with them.

God asked Adam, “Where are you?” not to procure information but to induce a confession.

Verse 18

Here is spontaneous testimony to the fact that all men were conscious of the dramatic events related in the Passion of Jesus Christ. “This has not been done in a corner.” (Acts 26:26)

The highest officials of government, both religious and secular, the total population of Jerusalem, with more than a million others there to observe the Passover, from all over the Roman Empire—all were interested, as either observers or participants, in the world-shattering drama of the crucifixion of Jesus our Lord.

Verses 19-20

Thus, the two disciples responded, as Jesus intended, by focusing attention upon the solemn events connected with His real sacrifice for sins.

Verse 21

“We hoped . . .” These two confessed their hope had vanished. How could a dead prophet redeem Israel? “The third day since . . .” If Jesus was buried about sunset on Friday, there is no way that these men would, on Sunday, have said, “This is now the third day since.” Sunday was not the third day since Friday; but it was the third day since Thursday.

Their mention of this would seem to imply their remembering Jesus’ promise about “rising again the third day,” but rather vaguely and without conviction that it would indeed occur.

Verses 22-24

At the time these two disciples had left the circle of believers, the Lord had not appeared to any of them. The Lord had appeared early that day to Mary Magdalene; but it appears this was discounted by all of the disciples, as it certainly had been by the Eleven.

Verse 25

“O foolish men . . .” Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 613) says, “This is not the same word as the one used in Matthew 5:22, where we are forbidden to say “Thou fool to our brother.”

This was Jesus’ dramatic way of emphasizing their failure to accept the plain teachings of the Old Testament prophecies. It seems incredible that after all that was written in the Old Testament concerning the Suffering Servant of God, His being despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and

even the exact scenes of the crucifixion remained almost totally blind to that phase of Messiah's character.

Norval Geldenhuys (op. cit., p. 637) said, "Artificial and even ridiculous explanations were applied to Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's sufferings and death. At all costs they reasoned away all the prophecies of the expiatory death of the Messiah and defended their own earthly view of a triumphant Jewish Messiah."

This is precisely the fault of all generations of men who have rejected what they did not like in God's Word, accepting only those portions of it which pleased them. Such persons say, "I believe in heaven but I do not believe in hell and the devil!"

It is mandatory to take account of "all that the prophets have spoken" on any given subject. Thus, in the understanding of the sacred gospels, it is absolutely necessary to believe "all" that is written in all four of them.

Verse 26

The gospel of Luke confirms the view often expressed in John that Jesus was glorified in His crucifixion. Upon the departure of Judas to betray Jesus the Lord said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." (John 13:31)

It was only by His sufferings that Christ could be made perfect. (Hebrews 5:8-9); and only "by His stripes" could men be healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

Verse 27

A long walk of some six or seven miles would have afforded time enough for mentioning a very large number of the glorious prophecies fulfilled in Jesus our Lord.

Verses 28-29

"As though He would go further . . ." There was no deceit in this, because Christ would have gone further had they not invited Him to be their guest. The Lord's blessings are always to be asked for and sought after by the men who would receive them.

Verses 30-31

Speculations are plentiful with regard to just how “their eyes were opened.” Some suppose that the familiar pattern of Jesus’ breaking bread and offering thanks as He had so frequently done in the presence of all His disciples. It is safer to conclude that the Lord willed their recognition of Him at that particular moment, and accordingly it occurred.

There can hardly fail to be a deep spiritual overtone in this to the effect that the Lord is still known to His disciples in the breaking of the bread of the Lord’s Supper, which continues to be in all ages the great separator between the saved and the unsaved.

“He vanished from their sight . . .” There were numerous appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, at least ten being detailed in the New Testament.

Verse 32

The study and meditation upon the word of God is ever the cause that produces the glowing heart in mortal men; and if ministers of the Lord’s gospel would have audiences of burning hearts, the means of achieving such a thing is here.

Verse 33

The marvelous event related here and in the next two verses was mentioned frequently by Mark 16:14-18 and more fully by John 20:19-23).

Verse 34

“Them that were with them (verse 33) . . .” included these who were testifying to the appearance of the Lord to Simon Peter.

Verse 35

From Mark 16:14-18, it would appear that even after all of this evidence had been received, a number of the apostles were still reluctant to believe. Peter, having seen the Lord already, could not have been among that number who were still unbelieving. Due to his shameful conduct in denying Jesus, it seems that Peter took no vigorous part in the discussions on that first day following the

resurrection. At least, no word or deed of Peter's in connection with that meeting is recorded by any of the Gospels.

JESUS' APPEARANCE TO THE APOSTLES AND OTHERS

(THOMAS ABSENT)

Verse 36

Some versions add, "Peace be unto you . . ." These were the last words Jesus had spoken after going forth to suffer crucifixion and death; but in the meanwhile, the conduct of the apostles had been such as to leave them weighted down with feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Under the circumstances, this was a shout of victory and a divine assurance that all would be well with them.

There were two reactions on the part of those present:

First, they were simply terrified, as any mortal would have been under the circumstances; but very soon this gave way to joy. Luke mentioned the terror, and John mentioned the joy, which was also mentioned by Luke in verse 41.

Verse 37

It was incumbent upon Jesus to win over the apostles to a complete and unfailing faith in His resurrection; and so, in these verses, one beholds the Son of God actually laying the keel, in a figure, of that ship of the church which would sail the seas of all subsequent generations.

After the interview reported in this paragraph and John's parallel, there was never any wavering at all on the part of the apostles. They passed up and down the provinces of the great empire shouting, "He is risen from the dead," sealing their testimony with blood, and preaching the gospel that turned the world upside down.

Verses 38-43

This was the overwhelming, absolutely convincing, undeniable, objective proof that Jesus rose from the dead. No wonder they believed it. Christ here established the fact of His resurrection in the intelligent faith of His apostles, the same being the foundation which no man could lay, "which is Christ the Lord." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

“See My hands and My feet . . . “This is as near as the New Testament comes to saying that the feet of Jesus were nailed to the cross.

“He took it and ate . . .” We shall not discuss the post-resurrection body of Jesus, because we know nothing of it. The wisdom of God has concealed many things, and among them is the exact nature and qualities of the post-resurrection body, either of Jesus or of ourselves in the hereafter.

Perfectly evident in the account here is the ability to appear and disappear at will, the ability to pass through doors without their opening, and the ability to be recognized or unrecognized at will.

Verse 44

In this and verses following, Luke telescopes a number of events which took place during a period of some forty days.

Ray Summers (op. cit., p. 333) called this verse (and to the end of the chapter) “a summary of Jesus’ teachings between His resurrection and His ascension.”

Jesus accepted the Old Testament in its entirety as the word of God; and here, Charles L. Childers (op. cit., p. 617) said, “Jesus is referring to the full gamut of Messianic prophecy, from the first promise in Genesis 3:15 to the book of Malachi.”

J. R. Dummelow (op. cit., p. xii) says, “The threefold division of the Old Testament is also indicated here by Jesus, these being the Torah, the Nebhiim, and the Kethubbim, corresponding to the three divisions Jesus here mentioned, the same being the ones recognized by the Jews.”

The divisions of the Old Testament are: “the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. In the New Testament another three divisions: the Gospels, the Epistles, and Revelation, thus making six divisions in the entire Bible.

Verse 45

This appears to be a reference to the gift of inspiration to the holy Apostles, the conveyance of that Holy Spirit which would guide them into all truth and bring to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said unto them.

Verse 46

This is a summary of the 'great commission' which was probably given repeatedly during the forty days prior to the ascension. This announcement of it stressed the importance of the sufferings of the Savior, and the great corollary of it—His resurrection from the tomb on the third day.

“All the nations . . .” is in the same vein of thought as “every creature’ in Mark, and “all the nations,” as in Matthew. H. Leo Boles (The Gospel According to Luke, p. 477) caught the significance of “beginning at Jerusalem” in these words: “They were not to regard even the city where Jesus was crucified as hopelessly wicked and too bad to be benefited by the gospel. The Jewish leaders who crucified Jesus were to hear the gospel and have the opportunity of being saved.”

“Beginning at Jerusalem . . .”

Here the reign of Jesus Christ began.

Here the dispensation of the Holy Spirit began.

Here the reign of Christ upon the throne of David began.

Here the reign of the apostles on twelve thrones began.

Here the great commission began to be preached.

Here the “times of the Gentiles” began.

Here the gospel of forgiveness began to be preached.

Here the church of Jesus Christ began.

Here the evangelization of the world began.

Verse 48

This brief verse has the effect of identifying the apostles as the ones addressed with regard to opening their minds to understand the scriptures.

The apostles were “witnesses” in the unique sense of having companied with Jesus from the baptism of John till he was taken up into heaven, a point to which Luke would return in the book of Acts 1:22.

Verse 49

This verse was also addressed to the apostles. They were here instructed not to begin the task of world-wide evangelism until they had been clothed with power from on high.

The power was to come after the Holy Spirit came upon them; and, since this event occurred upon the first Pentecost after the resurrection, it is quite correct to identify that Pentecost as the beginning of the gospel age, the birthday of the church, the beginning of Christ's reign upon the throne of David, etc. All of this is clearly evident in Acts the 2nd chapter.

Verses 50-51

THE ASCENSION

The above verses relate the ascension of Christ into heaven, an event which was ten days before the first Pentecost after the resurrection, and thus some forty days after the events related in the first part of this chapter.

This does not at all say the He ascended "from" Bethany, but from a point (on the Mount of Olives) which was over against Bethany, that village being located, of course, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

C. E. B. Cranfield (*The Gospel; According to St. Mark*, p. 465) observed that, "Human eyes were not permitted to see the event of the resurrection itself . . . The angels as the constant witnesses saw it. By their testimony the resurrection was made known to men."

In Acts 1:9-10, a cloud obscured the actual "going up" of Jesus; and, the holy angels announced the ascension in connection with that disappearance, their word identifies that event as the ascension; and, if we identify this occasion with that, as being one and the same, then this view is the most reasonable.

"Carried up into heaven" would then be understood as an event certified by angelical testimony but not actually witnessed by men.

Verses 52-53

All of the temple forms and ceremonies were made null and void by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; but for a season the Christians would still continue to

meet, out of habit long maintained, in such places as Solomon's porch and other areas within the temple. Before a generation ended, God would utterly destroy the temple, one evident purpose being that of separating all Christian activities from it.

However, it was too early at this point for the Christians fully to understand this. Of course, Luke did not mean that they "were in the temple throughout, but that they made use of every opportunity (as during the seasons of prayer) to go and worship in that temple." (Norval Geldenhuys, *op. cit.*, p. 647)

The Four Witnesses Agree

The four witnesses are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The order followed in this series of studies; and the mountain peaks of their quadruple testimony stand supremely above the mists of nineteen centuries. What do they say? What do they all say? What is their witness?

They said, and they all say, that:

Jesus of Nazareth is, was, and ever is a supernatural Person.

That He wrought the greatest wonders ever seen on earth.

That He gave Himself up to die in order to redeem men from sin.

That He was crucified and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.

That He rose from the dead on the third day.

That He repeatedly appeared to His own in His resurrection body.

That He commanded the gospel of salvation to be proclaimed to all men.

That He ascended to God and that all power in heaven and upon earth belongs to Him.

That He is one with Almighty God.

That He alone can redeem men from the curse of sin.

That He shall judge all men in the last day.

That He is now enthroned with God in heaven.

That He loves and cares for His spiritual body, the church.

That He is the Christ promised in the Old Testament.

That He alone is the name through which men ought to pray.

That He is Lord and Savior.

That He should be worshiped as the Father in heaven is worshiped.

That the fate of every soul, ever born on earth, hinges on that soul's relationship with Jesus Christ.

These facts call all men to turn their dying eyes to the Cross for salvation in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!